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[MAKING INQUIRIES.]

THE SWEET SISTERS OF INCHVARRA; OR, THE VAMPIRE OF THE GUILLAMORES.

CHAPTER III.

Oh, conspiracy!
Shem't thou to show thy dangerous
brow by night,
When evils are most free? *Shakespeare.*

At the dead of that same night a singular convocation took place in a wild and desolate region in a distant county.

The ruins of an ancient abbey was the spot chosen for a rendezvous by the mysterious-looking beings whose midnight exploit is about to be narrated; the moonbeams shone white and ghostly upon the ivy-mantled, roofless mass, and in the dead silence the stealthy footstep of each fresh arrival sounded with fearful distinctness as he picked his way through the debris that strewed the little chapel floor to join the group that clustered about the rude altar, which had been erected from the fragments of stone which had fallen from the walls.

These personages were all closely masked, their faces concealed by black crape or silk, with holes cut for the eyes, and their bodies by the long, rough, gray frieze coats so generally worn by the Irish peasantry.

Not a whisper passed between them as they congregated, and a tall, immovable figure, who stood beside the altar in the full light of the single tallow candle which stood upon it seemed to keep a sharp espionage over all, lest they should transgress this rule.

One by one they stole in and stood among the rest, till perhaps a dozen were collected, when the man at the altar, evidently the leading spirit there, raised his hand, and two of the men stepped back to the ruined doorway, hoisted up the massive wooden door from lying on the ground outside to its place, barricading it with heavy stones, and then returned.

There was a short silence, during which every eye was turned expectantly upon the leader, who stood with folded arms, his gaze fastened immovably upon the group.

Then in a deep, calm, suppressed voice, he said, using excellent English, and without a trace of the Irish accent:

"That I may be fully satisfied that no traitor has stolen in among us, come up, boys, give me the grip."

One by one the men obeyed, offering their hard, toil-worn hands to the leader, who, while his soft, white fingers closed over them with a strength that made the bones crack, shot a glance of ferocious earnestness at each, and whispered a brief query, which was answered in the same guarded tone, and in the same words by all.

The leader now produced from the darkness behind the altar a little religious emblem, which he set up beside the candle.

With one accord the men fell on their knees.

"By this cross you swear," said the leader, calmly.

"By this cross we swear," echoed the men, solemnly.

"To follow your leader," said he.

"To follow our leader," responded they.

"Through fire and flood," said the calm voice.

"Through fire and flood," repeated the many.

"To punish the traitor," said the ruling spirit.

"To punish the traitor," returned the conspirators.

"That broke the oath of secrecy," said the commanding tones.

"That broke the oath of secrecy," was the rejoinder.

"Pertaining to this awful order," he concluded.

"Pertaining to this awful order," followed the assemblage.

These words having been duly uttered, and in the most solemn manner, by the men, the leader produced a missal from beneath his cloak, and, holding it out, open, that all might see clearly what it was said:

"Come, boys, kiss the book."

One by one rose from his knees, reverently pressed his lips—uncovered for the moment—to the page and passed on.

When all had passed the leader said, in a low, impressive voice:

"And now, my faithful men, I take my oath upon this sacred cross and this holy book, that I will lead you to the house of none but the traitor himself."

He then kissed the missal, and, suddenly lifting the candle aloft, while his eyes glittered fiendishly, he dashed it on the ground.

"So shall the traitor's life be put out to-night!" said he. "Come, men, march."

The door was laid back on the ground, and the men poured out into the full radiance of the moonbeams.

The leader strode on across the grass-grown court to one of the crypts, which still preserved its form, and uttering a brief command took his seat upon a stone ledge and patiently waited while the men rolled out a jar of whisky from its concealment under a heap of turf, and producing a tin mug passed round a mighty draught to each, beginning with their captain.

As they drank their spirits rose, the awe which had depressed them dispersed, a mad excitement taking its place; they began to exchange deep, threatening mutters against the so-called traitor for whose punishment they had met, although not a man of them knew his name as yet.

Seeing that they were primed for any ruthless deed, their crafty leader now rose, and, enjoining complete silence, led the way at a swift stride away from the abbey, across a dreary peat-moor till they came in sight of a modest little farmhouse standing by itself, in rather a pretty situation, its back actually leaning against a sandstone cliff and the level waste of moor in front.

A nice square of green before the door, and a potato patch at hand, with some stacks of wheat standing in a well-tilled field near, gave evidences of thrift and industry.

As the silent band tramped toward the house the whisper went round:

"An' is it Shane? Ooh! ooh! sarra be an him, but it's not him I would have suspected."

"Silence!" said their leader, sternly. They approached the little whitewashed fence, and saw some white things fluttering over it, and an irresistible thrill of superstitious fear ran through their guilty hearts.

"Sure it's the 'good people' guardin' av thim round about; they war always a fair-spoken an' honest pair, an' all Ballycreenan says that same," whispered one among the band.

Their leader turned sharp, caught the speaker by the collar, and, hurling him apart from the others, hissed out, fiercely:

"Idiot! would you hint at treason? Would you dare to doubt the word of the leader you've sworn to obey? Another such speech and its utterer will receive his reproof in harder language;" and he significantly touched his breast. "Don't you see," added he, releasing the man, with a contemptuous push that sent him several paces ahead of the rest, "that the things you mistake for fairies, or whatever you call them, are only a few rags hung out to dry on the current bushes?"

"Och! suren't that's what they are, hard-scrab to thim anyhow—some av the gurl Katty's wash-bolike," muttered the men, mightily relieved.

Their captain now pulled a pocket-flask out and hurriedly passed round another draught of fiery potent, which had the desired effect of rousing their malignant feelings; so that when he gave the word to proceed they almost broke into a run in their eagerness to arrive at the little farmhouse.

Arrived at the gate, the band-like leader took a box of matches out of his pocket and thrust a few into each horny palm, giving his orders with the most collected air imaginable, and even turning the tragedy for which they were preparing into a jest, which was received with smothered laughter by the half-frenzied men.

The house lay white and peaceful in the moonlight, a faint blue curl of smoke lazily ascending from the wide-throated stone chimney was the only sign of life. Stout wooden shutters were put up inside the small windows, so that not a glint of the frelight was visible from the outside.

Stealthily the captain of the band opened the gate, and stealthily his followers stole after him through the crisp rows of cabriages and turnips.

They surrounded the cottage on three sides, for the fourth was built against the cliff, which wadded off the north wind like a rampart.

They stood each in his appointed place, his face set towards the wall of the house.

Suddenly the word came:

"Ready!" Simultaneously every right hand struck a light on every left sleeve.

"Now, boys, for vengeance!" said the inexorable voice.

Every man held up his blazing match to the thatch which overlapped the wall, and in a few seconds a dozen tongues of red fire were licking up the tinder-dry material, while a flare that put out the tender brilliance of the moon shot up.

The light breath of night air caught the flames, and bent them on the trimly thatched roof as the wind bows the grain to earth again; they caught, they brightened, they sparkled, they shot up tall and fierce and roaring, and spat out gusts of sparks that fell again like showers of rubies that caught anew.

The demonic band moved back a few paces out of harm's way, and with glittering, ferocious eyes watched their work.

Their leader, with his arms folded and his steel-cold eye afire with exultation, faced the door, the only outlet.

Suddenly a piercing scream in a woman's voice broke the death-like silence, answered in a second after by a shout in a man's.

The inmates were roused at last.

A moment after the door was thrown open, and a young girl in her night-clothes, her face blanched and distorted with terror, looked out.

The captain made a sudden gesture, and, aiming a pistol full in her face, said, sternly:

"No quarter for informers or for them that's of the blood of informers."

A young man now darted to her side, caught her back from the door, and shut and bolted it, yelling fiercely:

"Do yer worst! It's not the likes of yer that'll either see the death-blood or hear the death-wail av wan av our name."

After this not another whisper came from the inmates of the burning house.

The flames soared higher and higher, the window burst out, the roof fell in and splashed the blazing embers in all directions; the conflagration reached its

height, the heat was intense and drove the murderous on-lookers out of the garden; the fire burned lower, till a heap of fiercely glowing embers lying in the bottom of four stone walls, and a half-ruined chimney, were all that was left of the pretty little thrifty home.

"They're done for," observed the leader at last, coolly putting his pistol in his bosom; "so now to your homes, and remember the oath of secrecy."

"Yes, sur, the oath of secrecy—yes, sur!" babbled the drunken demons, reeling away over the moor.

The old man Denis, who was shot in the forest near Varra; the young lady, Aileen, who vanished at the mouth of Kivvarra Cave; and the young man and woman, Shane and Kathleen, whose house was burned over their heads—all these bore one surname, that of GUILLAMORE.

CHAPTER IV.

These gracious words revive my drooping thoughts,
And give my tongue-tied sorrows leave to speak. *Shakespeare.*

VARA GUILLAMORE went about the old castle like a ghost, silent and drooping, while the whole country side grieved over the double misfortune which had befallen her.

Her faithful protector and her beloved sister snatched from her in one hour; sure never such a blow had been struck the ancient family of Guillamore before!

The murderer of Denis was eagerly searched for by detectives brought from Dublin by Dick Frayne, and the body of Aileen was mournfully watched for by hundreds of loving eyes; but all was in vain.

Meanwhile Varra never rallied from the first shock. She was utterly incapable of directing her own affairs in the slightest degree; indeed her mind seemed temporarily alienated, and no word ever passed her lips but the name of her lost and idolized Aileen.

The young ladies Guillamore had no relatives or friends whom they could call to their aid except the poor people of Varra, who fondly regarded themselves as vassals of the Guillamores; their mother's connexions had held aloof from her ever since she married the dashing Irish colonel with his decayed estate and tumbled-down castle; and their father's connexions had long been scattered over the face of the earth until the Guillamores of Inchvarra knew not where to find one of the Franco-Irish descendants of their forefather, John the Frenchman, as they named him in default of his own name.

Denis Guillamore, some forty-second cousin of theirs, was the only relative they knew of, saving Kenelm, their wandering brother, who had cast them off ten years ago; and now Denis was dead and buried. He alone had known the ins and outs of the family's pecuniary difficulties, and he had not been in his grave a fortnight when dire confusion and destruction enveloped the helpless Varra's affairs.

Creditors came forward, whose names had never been heard save by Denis. Old debts came out of their obscurity that nobody knew a word about; notices came down on the astonished household; and there was not a soul to transact business with but poor, blundering Dick, who could scarcely sign his own name.

One day Elise followed Varra into the bare antique room which she and Aileen used to sit in, and sobbing and sighing behind her apron wailed out:

"Och oh, pulse of my heart, it's the bitter day that has come upon this afflicted house; the estate is to be sold, an' the roof over the innocent young head of ye, an' the wide wurruld is to be your portion. Och, Varra asthore, come to my breast—come, navoursen, an' cry, dear, cry—it'll aise the frozen heart av ye!"

Poor Varra looked calmly at the old woman, but did not speak.

"Oh, swate an' pitiful mother!" groaned Elise, "the mind's gone; she doesn't understand a blessed word I say, the cruther! Miss Varra, acushla, do ye hear? Inchvarra is to be sold!"

"Yes, Elise, I understand," said Varra, betraying no emotion whatever. "I have no home any longer. And Aileen is drowned. And Denis—ah!"

She turned away shuddering.

So as there was no one to compromise matters, no one like faithful Denis to keep the wolves at bay with fair promises and pious frauds, while he worked like a galley-slave at his life's work of paying off the thriftless colonel's debts and supporting his unscrupulous daughters, Inchvarra went under the hammer, and the helpless young thing was actually beggared.

Old Elise and her son Dick suffered as heavily in one sense as Varra herself, inasmuch as they lost

their all—shelter, food, and work to keep their hands busy.

They retired from the castle, knowing not where to lay their heads; but even in their destitution these faithful souls served their young lady to the best of their ability, and begged a temporary home for her among the Varra people, while they searched for some employment that might bring them money enough to support her.

Such devotion may seem incredible, but it is far from uncommon in warm-hearted Ireland, where the good wife in the most miserable of hovels will not permit the beggar to turn from her door without putting a double handful of meal into his bag for Heaven's sake.

Well, the beautiful and nobly descended Irish lady was lodged at Fisher Iman's cottage, and her benumbed intelligence was as torpid as ever. She scarcely seemed to know that she was in a strange place, and never voluntarily opened her lips to speak—she who used to have a gracious word for every one.

The day after her departure from Castle Inchvarra an open barouche drove very slowly through the village, while its occupant, a lady, examined every cottage narrowly.

Varra chanced to be walking to and fro before the door of Iman's house. In her deep black garments, with her pale countenance, dreamy abstraction, and drooping grace, she made a striking object in that rough, squallid scene.

The lady in the carriage scrutinized her features with singular and intense interest, turning in her seat after the carriage had passed to continue her examination. When some distance off she stopped the carriage, and, calling a woman from her door-step, asked a number of questions concerning Varra, and was informed of her painful history.

Next morning a gray-headed and eminently dignified man in livery drove up in a close carriage to Iman's door, descended, and had a conference with the fisherman and his wife.

A lady living in Clonsachen (the town fifteen miles off) had heard the sad history of Miss Guillamore, and, being rich and lonely, she offered Miss Guillamore a home until she wished to leave her.

The lady was a widow, young, and of the name of St. Columb. Driving through Varra she had been fortunate enough to see Miss Guillamore, and was so charmed by her looks and touched by her situation that she longed to be of use to her.

The splendid proposal quite enchanted Iman and Sheelah O'Donnell—it was the very thing for their young lady, they triumphantly agreed, and in half an hour Varra Guillamore was rolling away from the castle where she was born, to be the protégée of the unknown Lady Bountiful who had taken compassion on her.

In due time the carriage drew up before a rather small but elegant and comfortable-looking house in the aristocratic quarter of the old town of Clonsachen.

A high stone wall abut in the house and its tiny pleasure grounds, and the billowing mass of green foliage lit up by fiery fuchsias which hung over the wall gave passers-by a hint of the fond beauties within.

A heavy wooden door was set deep in this wall, and on the door a small silver plate was screwed bearing this inscription:

"Mrs. Royal St. Columb."

The man in livery rang the bell, then assisted Varra from the coach and led her, passive and uninterested as usual, to the door, which was almost instantly opened by a maid remarkable for the comeliness of her person and tastefulness of her attire. Indeed her costume would have looked quaintly pretty at a fancy ball. She wore a soft gray dress and a coquettish white muslin apron, frilled and fluted to perfection; her dainty linen collar was fastened by a blush-rose-hued bow, and on her handsomely arranged hair was perched a small bonnet of lawn and lace, the most ideal badge of servitude imaginable.

With a highly trained air of respect this fair damsel led the way across the garden, which was a blaze of autumn flowers arranged most artistically, through a small conservatory, where exotics of the most delicate and ethereal hues and of faintest, subtlest perfumes were grouped in pots of precious ware by hands of no ordinary taste. They reached the farther end, where was a pair of folding doors covered with pale gray velvet; these the young woman noiselessly opened, swept aside a silken curtain of a still paler hue, and announcing, with a strong foreign accent, Miss "Guillamore," gently pushed Varra in and withdrew with the man in livery.

The chamber in which Varra now stood silent and self-absorbed was small, and arranged with an assumption of elegant simplicity, which was everywhere contradicted by the exquisite fragility and beauty of the adornments.

The walls were hung with a soft, opal-hued, lustrous brocade, here and there swept aside by a hand of consummate grace to disclose some lovely statuette of pink spar or snowy carrara; the ceiling was faintly dyed as if by the reflection of a rosy evening sky, while from silvery curling cloudlets forms of matchless delicacy seemed to float; the floor was covered by a velvet carpet, the blending browns and grays of which suggested a fall of autumn leaves; and every niche was occupied by some quaint, fanciful stand of curious bric-a-brac.

An indescribable odour pervaded the atmosphere, too intangible and evanescent to amount to a perfume, yet fraught with a strange languorous delight which appealed to the most delicate of sensual passions almost as much as soft and tender music would have done.

But of all the beautiful and alluring things in that sybaritic chamber none was so utterly and bewilderingly enchanting as the occupant, the lady who had passed through Varra in her carriage to get a glimpse of Varra—Mrs. St. Columb.

Her figure was tall, and of such just and noble proportions that one was not so much struck by its unusual height as by the flexible grace, the undulating wave and balancings of its motion; a swan upon a tranquil stream might alone imitate such curves. She had what a physiognomist would call a great countenance, herosim in its every feature, from dazzling brow to firm, round chin; the softness and lustre of the eye, the arch of the forehead, the subtle pointing of the nose, and, above all, the peculiar set of the mouth, evidenced a being born to govern, determined to govern, and possessed of that amazing, cool fortitude that insures success.

This was the meaning of the face which was wont to draw all eyes with its extraordinary beauty, but most eyes saw no farther than the noble features, the dazzling complexion, the gracious and regal smile, and the splendid orb of changeal and iridescent hue.

Those wonderful eyes! they were a study in themselves. Now red-brown, now hazel, now black, who could tell what colour they were? For, like the Mexican opal described by Liegt, their focus was constantly obscured by olive-coloured mists, veiling and unveiling the inner splendor.

Her hair provoked as much dispute as her eyes as to its hue; probably when discoloured, hair by hair, half of them would have been found raven black, half yellow golden.

This wondrous mass she wore coiled round her crown in a massive plait and fastened with a jet arrow feathered with brilliants; and, in truth, her whole hair seemed dusted with gold powder whenever a sunbeam rested on it.

Her dress was as unique as her person. Her black silk robe, fitting loosely to her figure, was caught halfway down the bosom by a single diamond without apparent setting, and then fell open to her feet, displaying an undergarment of white tulle; her long, wide sleeves swept almost to the floor, showing under sleeves of the same pearly white material.

Mrs. St. Columb slowly crossed the room, stood before Varra, and looked at her long and intently.

Varra kept her gaze riveted upon the floor, sunk in dull apathy.

"Poor child!" half-whispered the lady, in faint, sweet accents touched with a foreign flavour. Not a muscle of Varra's rigid countenance quivered in response.

Mrs. St. Columb softly removed her bonnet and cloak, took her by the hand and led her, passive as usual, to a low seat facing a window that looked into a jungle of white azaleas.

Then she seated herself before a small piano, half hidden behind a fluted pillar which upheld a winged statuette, and broke the stillness with a faint and tender melody.

Varra did not seem to heed or to hear. Gradually the pianist changed the mood of her air and slid into the heart of a very whirlwind of strange madness, ranging through the whole of the emotions from intense regret to passionate despair; and yet through the agonizing confusion a melody replete with sad veneration and tender humility passed and repeated like an angel's whisper counseling, consoling, compassionating in language fit to penetrate the most frozen of grief-bound hearts.

Varra's dull face stirred at last; she listened, she understood.

Her slight form began to quiver with agitation, the tears to roll down her cheeks; her lips were convulsively pressed together.

Again, again that mystic burst of despair answered by that divine whisper; it spoke to the poor heart as soul to soul.

A half-choked cry interrupted the musician; she looked round; her guest had fallen on her knees.

Mrs. St. Columb glided from her place and raised

the young girl in her arms, sinking into the chair she had occupied, with her head close to her bosom.

"Poor child!" breathed the faint, sweet, foreign voice again; "weep your heartful here; you weep on the compassionate heart of a friend."

The soft beseechment of that hand and eye, the magnetic influence of that low-pitched voice, took the wildly sorrowing girl captive.

She yielded herself to the stranger's clasp and leaned upon her downy bosom as if she had found rest indeed.

After a long while, when quite exhausted with tears, Varra drew a long sigh, lifted her head, and gazed upon the beauteous face of her companion.

"Oh, who are you?" exclaimed she, fascinated and astonished.

"I am one who has suffered so much sorrow in my day that I know how to feel for you. I am one who hopes to be your friend and protector instead of those you have lost," answered Mrs. St. Columb.

Varra gently disengaged herself and glanced about her and back at the lady in wondering silence. Bewilderment and alarm struggled for precedence in her speaking countenance.

"You would like to know more concerning me?" said Mrs. St. Columb, with a gentle smile. "Ah! well, it is natural. I am a wealthy woman without a being in the world whom I can call my own to lavish my love upon; I have learned of your most crushing misfortunes and long to adopt you for my sister, friend, whatever you choose, so that I may have the happiness of succouring one even more unfortunate than myself. Now, my dear Miss Guilmores, I frankly offer you a home with me, for as long or as short as you are pleased to stay, assuring you that I am placing you under no obligation whatever, as you will soon understand when you have lived long enough with me to observe that it is a necessity of my nature to love and care for some being."

During this address Varra's emotions underwent many changes, her wonder increased but her alarm vanished wholly, and her whole soul turned with a sudden passionate longing toward the generous and beautiful lady and the home she tendered.

She was alone in the world, homeless, portless, crushed by misfortune. From the innate generosity of her warm and impulsive Irish nature she could perfectly understand and appreciate this offer from a stranger; she would have made such an offer herself had she been in Mrs. St. Columb's place.

Filled with admiration, gratitude, and a host of agitated memories of the lost past, Varra suddenly threw herself on her knees beside Mrs. St. Columb, and looking up with streaming eyes exclaimed:

"What can I do but say yes, and thank you from my heart?"

Mrs. St. Columb gazed upon the upturned innocent face with fixed eyes; and how it was one cannot tell, but in that moment, when eye met eye, both women shivered as if a spirit had passed them by.

We must now retrace our steps to that night which opens this tale for a farther elucidation of some of the atrocious events which then occurred.

The scene to which we would now invite attention is the interior of Shane and Kathleen Guilmores' house a few hours before the diabolical descent of the masked band upon it.

Shane and Kathleen were brother and sister, the children of a worthy if humble pair who had lost their lives, together with the two youngest of their offspring, during one of the visitations of the famine which so often decimates the poorer population of beautiful Ireland. Since that time, some four or five years ago, Shane and Kathleen had kept house together, working their modest little farm with a fair amount of success and winning "the good word" of all who knew them for their honesty, sobriety, and obliging disposition.

Shane eschewed all secret societies, and Kathleen all coquetish amusements. They were, in a word, irreproachable.

Shane was now twenty-two, a stout, jovial-looking young fellow, and Kathleen was seventeen, the prettiest girl by all odds in Ballygreenan, and as yet neither was in love.

To-night, however, Kathleen kept a pretty sharp eye on her brother as he sat on the other side of the wide hearth grate smoking his pipe while he gazed into the hollow caverns of the glowing turf fire, for a feminine suspicion had entered her mind that something had happened to Shane.

"Agh, now, Shane!" exclaimed she, "is it day-dramin' ye are, or is it love-struck, for, faith, your face grows longer every day, it does!"

Shane started, and put on a less dreamy expression.

"Tut, Katy, love-struck is it? Ho! he! Would you have my face always as broad as Tim Fuddle the Fool's, wid the simple laugh av him, the crathur?"

"No; but it needn't be as long as a ladder whenever you sit down to your pipe. What's the matter wid you, any way?"

Involuntarily Shane drew a profound sigh as he shook the ashes from his pipe.

"Now," cried Katy half-playfully, half-reproachfully, "would you tell me stories? It's trouble that's in it, Shane, the riat maybe, or rot in the praties; och, tell me now, agra," and putting her knitting down on the table, she crossed the glowing hearth, and laid her nice little brown hands on his shoulders, her blooming cheek against his.

"Augh! be aff wid ye for a comedherin coaxer; mebbe I'm foolish to give in to ye at all."

"Well, Katy, I am in trouble, sore trouble, an' I dinna know what's to become av us," said Shane, laying his "dudheen" affectionately on his knee, and plunging both his hands into his thick hair. "Ye saw Pool Tim talkin' wid me beyant there to-day?" continued he, in a half-whisper. "Well, the gossoon isn't all there as all the wurruld knows, so he isn't, but he couldn't have dhramed what he told me was happenin' at the ould abbey Wednesday night. He slapes there sometimes, the poor, afflicted crathur; and last Wednesday he wor lyin' in the place that used for to be the chapel behind one of the big middle pillars, when in comes a mather of ten or a dozen av the neighbours, all wid coverings on their faces, for to disguise thim boloko; an' they held a sort av conference all in the dark afther goin' through some secret signs an' that—"

"Saints and angels preserve us!" whispered Katy, her bright eyes dilating, "thim's the White Byes, for sartin."

"Whisht! asthore! don't name thim; we don't know what they wor, an' a dumb mouth's a safe mouth. Anny way they had met to be told by the captain that wan av thim was a thraitor that had informed against thim, an' to be made to swear that no man there was the guilty wan—"

"Blessed Mother!" whispered Katy, her face paling with awe.

"Further," continued Shane, lowering his voice still more cautiously, "they wor all bid to pass out of the chapel while the captain talked alone wid wan man; an' f'wado do ye think they wor sayin'?"

"Goodness only knows!" exclaimed Katy, her eyes growing bigger and bigger, her rich bloom fading.

"The captain—a stranger, Fool Tim says, wid an English tongue in his head—was soundin' Phelim O'Hara—Tim knew him by the twang av him—about how wan called Shane Guilmores wor estamed in Ballygreenan."

"Och, murder!" cried Katy, aghast.

"An'—whisper, Katy—whether the band 'ud be inclined to dale wid me in case it might be found that I was the thraitor!"

(To be continued.)

TENDERS will shortly be invited by the Russian Government for the construction of the proposed new canal which is to connect St. Petersburg with the sea. The contract, will, however, be given to no one who has not before executed similar work.

A GENTLEMAN, who has had the privilege of seeing, and it may be of possessing, a penny coined during the present year, informs us that the authorities of the Mint have made the Queen's head something like the Queen.

THE decorations of the late Duke of Brunswick were recently sold by auction by Messrs. Debonham, Storr, and Co., the total amount realized being about 5,000*l*. The Grand Cross of the order of "Le Fidélité de Bade," ornamented with carbuncles, diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and emeralds, fetched 869*l*. and the Grand Cross of the order of "Le Lion de Zähringen de Bade," the four arms of which are composed of a single emerald, and the centre in diamonds, was sold for 578*l*.

RUSSIAN LADY VOCALISTS.—The newest importation is eight Scandinavian lady vocalists who sing quaint Russian songs and chorally arranged German waltzes. Two are first sopranos, two are second sopranos, two are first alts, and two are second alts. A little picturesqueness of costume is a great help to our foreign troupes, and our Russian vocalists are uniformly attired in a closely fitting costume of black velvet, with sleeves of corse and white, and shoulder-knots of green and blue. The perfect blending of their voices, and the strange swing of the "Beautiful Blue Danube," by Strauss, for example, as it comes from their lips, constitute a new and agreeable sensation.

INDIAN SELF-SACRIFICE.—Six weeks ago, says the San Francisco Bulletin, seven male Indians and a young Indian woman started to cross Clear Lake, near the northern end, in a small boat, which was capsize three miles from land. They righted it, but as the lake was rough they could not bale it out, and while full of water it would not support more than

one person. The men put the girl in, and held on to the edges of the boat, supporting themselves by swimming till exhausted and chilled through the cold water, and then dropping off and sinking one by one. They showed no thought of disputing the young woman's exclusive right to the boat. She was saved by their self-sacrifice.

THE "CALLINGS" OF OUR PRESENT M.P.s.—The following table may be of interest; the first figures referring to pre-ballot days, and the second to the present House: Lawyers, 129, 139; sons of peers, 109, 92; squires, 109, 129; army, 106, 95; merchants, 98, 100; baronets, 68, 64; sons of M.P.s., 58, 55; sons of baronets, 29, 25; bankers, 18, 24; knights, 13, 11; sons of knights, 12, 17; navy, 9, 12; brewers, 8, 17; engineers, 8, 8; diplomatists, 7, 6; newspaper proprietors, 7, 9; medical men, 6, 6; peers, 5, 5; University professors, 5, 4; farmers, 2, 3; dissenting ministers, 2, 1; architect, 1, 0; accountant, 1, 1; miners, 0, 2.

One of the "privileges" of the House of Commons is that "beer, wine, and spirits" may be "drunk on the premises" without any licence whatever. If an exciseman entered St. Stephen's, and, after obtaining evidence, proceeded against the refreshment contractors for selling alcoholic liquors without a licence, he would soon be laid by the heels as having committed a violation of the privileges of the House. If the members of a self-denying ordinance would for only one single session shut up the bar, give out iced water alone in the smoking-room, stop the whiskey of the Irish and Scotch members, inhibit the brandy and seltzer of the English, and serve up suppers with tea and coffee, they would be in a position to calculate the inconvenience caused by their early closing hours to a large portion of the public.

SUMMER CAROL.

GAY comes the glorious summer,
Soft falls the rosy light
On the hills and green, leafy tree-tops,
And everything is bright.
Sweet are the song-birds singing,
In woodland valleys fair,
And every breeze is bringing
The odour of flow'rs rare.

Now the playful streams run laughing
And singing towards the sea,
And each morning the sun is quaffing
The dewdrops from the lea.
The patient herd stand grazing
Beneath the forest shade,
Where the orb of the sun is blazing,
Or in the streamlet wade.

Oh, that the joyous summer
Could last the livelong year!
That no dull and gloomy winter
Would come with visage drear!
Would that the young birds ever
Might sing in the greenwood fair,
And the flowers be faded never,
And earth no snow wreaths wear!

L. E. C. H.

SENSATIONS OF STARVING.

For the first two days through which a strong and healthy man is doomed to exist upon nothing his sufferings are perhaps more acute than in the remaining stages—he feels an inordinate, unspeakable craving at the stomach night and day. The mind runs upon beef, bread and other substantials, but still, in a great measure, the body retains its strength.

On the third and fourth days, but especially on the fourth, this incessant craving gives place to a sinking and weakness of the stomach, accompanied by a nausea. The unfortunate sufferer still desires food, but with a loss of strength he loses that eager craving which is felt in the earlier stages. Should he chance to obtain a morsel or two of food, he swallows it with a wolfish avidity; but five minutes afterwards his sufferings are more intense than ever. He feels as if he had swallowed a living lobster, which is clawing and feeding upon the very foundation of his existence.

On the fifth day his cheeks suddenly appear hollow and sunken, his body attenuated, his colour is ashy pale, and his eyes wild, glassy and cannibalish. The different parts of the system now war with each other. The stomach calls upon the legs to go with it in quest of food; the legs, from weakness, refuse.

The sixth day brings with it increased suffering, although the pangs of hunger are lost in an overpowering languor and sickness. The head becomes giddy—the ghosts of well-remembered dinners pass in hideous processions through the mind.

The seventh day comes, bringing increasing lassitude and further prostration of strength. The arms hang lifelessly, the legs drag heavily. The desire for food is still left, to a degree, but it must be brought, not sought. The miserable remnant of life which still hangs to the sufferer is a burden almost too grievous to be borne; yet his inherent love of existence induces a desire still to preserve it, if it can be saved without a tax upon bodily exertion. The mind wanders. At one moment he thinks his weary limbs cannot sustain him a mile, the next, he is endowed with unnatural strength, and if there be a certainty of relief before him, dashes bravely and strongly forward, wondering whence proceeds his new and sudden impulse. W. W. H., M.D.

HOW SEA LIONS ENJOY LIFE.

It is an extraordinary, interesting sight to see the marine monsters, many of them bigger than an ox, at play in the surf, and to watch the superb skill with which they know how to control their own motions when a huge wave seizes them and seems likely to dash them in pieces against the rocks. They love to lie in the sun upon the bare and warm rocks; and here they sleep, crowded together, and lying upon each other in inextricable confusion. The bigger the animal, the greater his ambition appears to be to climb to the highest summit; and when a huge, slimy beast has, with infinite effort, attained a solitary peak, he does not tire of raising his sharp-pointed, maggot-like head, and complacently looking about him.

They are a rough set of brutes—rank bullies, I should say; for I have watched them repeatedly, as a big fellow shouldered his way among his fellows, reared his huge front to intimidate some lesser seal which had not secured a favourite spot, and, first with howls, and if these did not suffice, with teeth and main force, expelled the weaker from his lodgment. The smaller sea lions, at least those which have left their mothers, appear to have no rights which anyone is bound to respect. They get out of the way with an abject promptness which proves that they live in terror of the stronger members of the community; but they do not give up their places without harsh complaints and piteous groans.

Plastered against the rocks, and with their lithe and apparently boneless shapes conformed to the rude and sharp angles, they are a wonderful, but not a graceful or pleasing sight. At a little distance they look like huge maggots, and their slow, ungainly motions upon land do not lessen this resemblance. Swimming in the ocean, at a distance from the land, they were inconspicuous objects, as nothing but the head shows above water, and that only at intervals. But when the vast surf, which breaks in mountain waves against the weather side of the Farallones with a force which would in a single sweep dash to pieces the biggest Indianman—when such a surf, vehemently and with apparently irresistible might, lifts its tall white head, and with a deadly roar lashes the rocks half-way to their summit—then it is a magnificent sight to see a dozen or half a hundred great sea lions at play in the very midst and fiercest part of the boiling surge, so completely masters of the situation that they allow themselves to be carried within a foot or two of the rocks, and, at the last and imminent moment, with an adroit twist of their bodies, avoid the shock, and, diving, re-appear beyond the breaker. C. N.

CANCER.

No facts have been observed which authorize the conclusion that cancer is an inherited disease; it is always a local disease, begins at some point in the body and disseminates itself until the whole constitution is impregnated with it and every fibre of the body becomes cancerous, that is, contains more or less of the cancerous principle, just as a poisonous bite beginning at a pin point spreads its baleful effects until the whole system comes within the deadly shadow of it. Thus it is that real cancer can never be eradicated by cutting it out; the whole blood is cancerous, and must develop itself somewhere; just like a root of clover—cut it out of the ground, it will grow no more at that spot, but there are tendrils to the main root which have shot out a foot or more away, which will shoot up in the form of half a dozen clover plants, when the parent stock has been removed.

There is a spurious cancer, apparently like the real, and which is often cured with a variety of poultices, and the persons who do this set themselves up as real cancer curers, and draw their patients from points thousands of miles away. The better plan in all cases, perhaps, is to rely on the opinion of a physician.

Although cancerous persons do not propagate the disease, they do beget consumptive children. Con-

sumption is always the result of debility, of a want of general good health, whatever may be the cause of the same; but cancer often attacks persons who have vigorous health. Cancer is terribly painful, with a slow march to inevitable death, with a horrible odour during the whole sickness. There is an impression on many minds that the finger nails are poisonous to a sore, from the frequent observation of the fact that sores conveniently situated for "picking" get well slowly, if at all; the reason is that if a sore is disturbed frequently, as on the lip or about the nose, it begins to lose the power of healing; and nature, seemingly angry in being so often thwarted in her efforts to cure, abandons the case, the edges of the sore become hard, then cancerous, and death follows. Hence, disturb healing sores as little as possible; never pick off a scab, and yet what an intense desire there is on the part of a person having a sore to "pick" it. In all cases let the scab fall off of itself.

RUSSIAN ITEMS.—Princess Marie of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, the betrothed of the Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovitch of Russia, proposes, in preparation for her marriage—which is to take place on the 30th of August—to acquire a knowledge of the Russian language. The German Ambassador at St. Petersburg, Prince Reuss, has been requested to select a master, and has despatched his own interpreter, M. Sergeyeff, to the grand-ducal capital to undertake the task of instruction. The Grand Duke Alexia, who was over here recently with his father the Czar, has been appointed to the command of the Russian frigate "Sretians," and is to be sent off on his travels again very shortly. The Czarewitch and his wife are now at the palace of Tsarskoe Selo, and the former is interesting himself about the establishment of a Museum of Russian antiquities and historical records.

DURHAM CATHEDRAL.—Sir Gilbert Scott is about to undertake some alterations in the interior of Durham Cathedral. He proposes to erect a very open choir screen, and to re-arrange the stalls, so that the back row shall be brought in front of the pier, instead of being between them, as is now the case. Their present position dates only from about the year 1345, when the Jacobean organ screen was removed. The organ will probably be divided, and placed in the two opposite arches of the westernmost bay in the choir. The old stall ends—very rich and interesting examples of the carving of Charles I's time—are to be retained, a conservative measure which we hope will be imitated elsewhere. The prejudice against everything which is not Gothic has already cost us too many of these valuable post-Reformation fittings. Sir Gilbert also proposes to lay the choir with a marble pavement in what may be called the Italian fashion.

USE OF SPECTACLES.—When you find that you are beginning instinctively to go to the window or the open door when you take up a paper or book to read, it is time for you to purchase a pair of spectacles; then get those of the lowest magnifying power, for if they magnify too much the eyes will get prematurely old—will fall rapidly. If, while reading, you find an inclination to stop and wink the eyes, as if to clear them, you need spectacles, or if you have them already you require older ones. A good way to rest the eyes from reading or fine sewing is either to close them for a few minutes, or look at something a long distance off; this gives great relief. Do not purchase glasses at cheap places, for there is great danger that the glasses are not alike—have not exactly the same focus, or are made of soft glass, which is easily scratched and then older ones are soon required. The value of Brazilian pebbles, which is a natural glass, is their greater hardness; hence they are not easily injured, last a great while and the eyes get old very slowly.

THE FARMER VERSUS THE COOK.—Colonel Lloyd-Lindsay, in a speech at the dinner of the Berks and Hants Agricultural Society, contrasted the economy and skill of the British farmer with the wastefulness and ignorance of the British cook. After applauding the enterprise and care with which farmers conducted their operations, he said that though the finest joints were placed before the cooks, the result was not so good as was produced in France with a few odds and ends which many in this country would reject altogether. Take the evidence of their family butcher, and they would find him state that his losses often arose from not being able to dispose of those odds and ends and scraps which not only poor people but the rich made such good out of in France. This uneconomical cookery was not confined to the houses of the rich. It was much worse in the cottages of the poor. As a rule, where the means were smallest the waste was greatest. This amounted to a national calamity, which, once recognized, ought, in these practical days, to be taken in hand, and, if possible, diminished or cured.



[THE BROKEN TRUST.]

FAIR ANNE OF CLY. THE STORY OF A LIFE'S AMBITION.

CHAPTER XX.

What a bridge
Of glass I walk upon, over a river
Of certain ruin, mine own weighty fears
Cracking what would support me!

Shakespeare.

In the midst of the momentary confusion and surprise the countess did as many others would have done in her place, Anne gave way to a sudden and womanly impulse which arose from the old memories still dear to her, and called her cousin by his Christian name.

"Sidney," she said, "how you surprised me." She held out her hand to him with her old sweet, frank smile, and in that moment of brief elysium Sidney almost forgot the gulf that was now between them.

"Anne," he replied, with the old familiarity of former years, "this is very unexpected. How have you been? I am so glad to meet you once more."

Lord Herbert drew back. He saw in a moment that they were relations, and there was no cause for interference.

The viscount, having bowed and formally shaken hands with his fair young stepmother, looked on with a degree of curiosity mixed with his evident amusement at the meeting.

Arthur was as gay and flippant as ever, bursting into conversation at once with his old friend the marquise, commenting most ruthlessly upon Athens, the Athenians past and present, and laughing over some of the inscriptions found on a few of the old ruins, and wound up by suggesting the stern necessity of starting an anti-archæological society for the abolition of these useless relics of antiquity, and the propagation of modern progress.

Sidney and his lovely cousin had walked on side by side.

Anne could not resist the longing to inquire after the old folks at home. The letters she had received were brief and reserved, she said, as if they feared to write in the old strain of affectionate confidence.

"How is my darling mother?" she asked, tenderly.

"Well, when I last saw her," Sidney replied; "she had been ill. I have only been to Cly once since you left the old place."

"You, too, deserted them, Sidney?"

"What was I to do? I could not remain in Cly

after what had happened. Besides, it was time I put myself out in the world; uncle thought so too."

"But you parted friends, did you not?"

"Yes; uncle and aunt were both generous and kind to me—kinder than I deserved, and I regret that I left them in anger. I went to London with Lord Arthur. I have been studying under two of the greatest architects in England. I have taken a tour to study ancient architecture. We have but lately left Pompeii."

"Do you like the profession?"

"Very much. I may make a name some day—who knows? There is room, and the ladder of fame may be, in my opinion, successfully mounted with dogged perseverance to the goal of success."

"Which merit will always bring."

Sidney shook his head gravely.

"No," he said, "merit does not always succeed. Honour and fame are more the rewards of success than of merit."

The countess looked at him earnestly.

Short as the time was since they had parted, Sidney had changed.

He looked older by some years, a hard line or two could be traced round his firmly set mouth, and an habitual contraction of the brows gave him a grave and thoughtful air.

"I have a very different opinion of the world now," he went on, "to what I had when at the old home, with no better knowledge of it than what I gained from books. Wipe out the selfish, the heartless, the dishonourable, the sham, the false, the deceit, and the world would be a chaos. People live too rapidly, too hard. There is no room left for the over-consciousness, no room for generous impulse; you must go with the times and concentrate your love, your generosity, your care and respect for one person only—self!"

"A time will come, I hope, Sidney, when you will think more kindly and more gently of the world," said Lady Anne, quietly.

"Never, I fear," he answered, with the short, bitter laugh of a cynic. "Life's battle is a hard one, and those who lose must go to the wall and remain in the ruck of drudgery and dependence, and I don't intend to be a loser if I can help it. But, tell me, have you heard of the Lynns' great trouble?"

"Yes, but it is over. Kate is safe!"

"Safe, but she is a cripple. How long she will remain so is a question of time. But tell me of yourself, Anne. You are very happy now?"

"The earl is very good to me; can I be otherwise?"

"No, how should you? How many are there in

this world who would sell their soul for a little, and you—"

"This is our hotel," said the countess, quietly.

She had unconsciously exhibited a certain air of hauteur and dignity from present associations, and did not quite relish Sidney's slightly sardonic allusions to the past.

They paused on the steps for Arthur and Lord Herbert to come up with them.

"I am very sorry that the earl has gone to England," Lady Anne said, turning to her handsome young stepson. "I had more than once hoped to bring you together again; father and son should never be parted in life."

"Thank you, my lady. A charming sentiment, but I fear, however much the son might believe in it, the father is not likely to."

"We can only judge of those who have been tried," was the somewhat sage remark, from the fair young countess. "Will you come up for one hour? There will be a few visitors shortly, some of them not strangers to you."

"Your ladyship is very kind, and, with your permission, I will return in about an hour?" answered the viscount, glancing at his somewhat dusty attire as the real excuse for his wish to return to his hotel. The countess bowed assent.

Vynedon escorted her to the staircase, and then rejoined Lord Arthur and Sidney.

He strolled back to the viscount's hotel, where Sidney was staying.

Night had come on now, and Lord Arthur's attention was attracted by the appearance of a lady who had twice followed them very closely.

"Who is that?" he asked, pausing and looking back.

"Whom do you mean?" asked Lord Herbert.

"That woman with an elegant figure, quick and gliding step, and dark skirt."

"I do not know that I have seen her before."

"I have, twice to-night; her figure, and general style are familiar to me."

The marquise laughed.

"Perhaps you know better than any one else," he said, resuming his journey.

"If I see her again," said the viscount, gravely, "I shall most certainly follow her."

He did see her again, he had kept a sharp look out on the way back to the hotel where the Countess of Dalryell was staying, and within twenty yards of it came full upon the same veiled lady, and he started forward as if to lay a hand upon her as she turned and rapidly glided away.

"What is in the wind?" he said, with a troubled look. "I know her now, I penetrated her

veil in spite of herself. That is Charlotte Nupton, and she is here for no good purpose."

Sidney and Lord Herbert had both heard of her. Nothing farther was said now, as the twenty yards between the spot where Charlotte Nupton had stood and the hotel had been got over while the viscount was proclaiming his discovery.

He did not deem the circumstance worthy a second thought, but laughed it off as the laughed most things off, and presented himself before his sweet young stepmother and her guests as gay and smiling and handsome as when she first knew him as Arthur only.

The guests were few. Only two French families and one English, acquainted with Dalyell, had followed them to Athens. They were all strangers to Sidney.

He tried hard to be lively amongst them, but could not even be rational. His eyes would linger upon the woman who had been trained for his wife; his thoughts would revert to the past, and the old fierce passion for the lovely creature came back in spite of himself and the sacred barrier of matrimony which was between them.

By degrees he became silent and reflective, then moody and solitary. When the countess was engaged in conversation with any of her visitors he would repair to the balcony and drearily sniff away a cigarette.

He hated the magnificence of his brilliant flattery of speech, he was jealous of his attentions to her whom he never could drive wholly from his breast.

"I wish I had not seen her," he mused, when for the third time he had stolen out of the drawing-room. "I thought all these pangs were over. Surely they were bitter and lasted long enough. But no! the sight of her has revived them and intensified them. I will leave Athens, I dare not stay here with her."

He made this resolve with every intention of keeping it. There was nothing new in Sidney Cardiff playing the man. His heart was sound enough in its principles. He tried to think, with Congress, that "nature is each child's proper sphere."

"Providence has taken her from me," he thought, sadly, "and I cannot replace."

Though Sidney Cardiff liked to fancy he had turned cynic, that he was callous and worldly, because he went for a few months into dissipation to drown his first great sorrow, he was still honourable and upright, an ambitious but a discontented man.

His sweet cousin, in a coisely way, aided him for seeming so dull. Her womanly instinct told her the cause, but womanly prudence suggested the expedient of making him believe that the past was all forgotten.

She played her part well, the part of an unaffected, amiable relative, speaking tenderly of old times and of the old house, calling him Sidney because the tie of kin gave her that privilege.

"Shall I see you again to-morrow, Sidney?" she said, when the guests had departed and Lord Herbert was conversing apart with another.

"Shall I come, Anne?"

"Why do you ask in that tone, Sidney?"

"Because," he answered, with a desperate kind of earnestness, "I have been thinking I shall leave Athens at once, that it is better I should," and then, after a little hesitation, "for both our sakes, Anne."

No amount of acting could ever have carried Anne through that moment as did her natural dignity and virtuous pride. Her eyes opened with surprise, a rose tint mantled her fair brow, and she drew herself up, quite unconscious of the womanly grace of the act.

"Sidney," she said, looking full into his eyes, "for the sake of old times, for the sake of those who loved and still love you as their own, I do not wish to forget that you are my cousin, my old playmate, my brother in all but the blood tie. I shall never forget that I loved you as a brother. I shall always love you as my cousin; but I also shall not forget that I am a wife, Sidney, nor forget a wife's duty. If you fear for yourself I pity you. Do not fear for me. Let us be frank even if we are commonplace. We must no longer indulge in childish fancies. Romantic sentiment some would call it; a sense of honour tells me it is a mortal sin. You are a man, Sidney, and you gave promise to be a frank-hearted, ingenious one. Keep that promise and your cousin's friendship. Good night."

Humiliated and abashed, Sidney returned the pressure of her soft, white hand, but made no reply, only gave an eloquent glance with his large hazel eyes, then drooped his head, and, with a sigh, turned away and left the room.

He was soon followed by Lord Herbert and Arthur, and they joined him on the steps under the piazza.

He was moping going along, remained deaf to the conversation of his companions, uttered a cold "Good night" when Wyneden left them, and when in his room with Arthur he expressed the burden of his thoughts very briefly.

"I shall leave Athens at once," he said, moodily. "But do not let me drag you away, my lord."

"My dear Sidney, don't look so gloomy and don't address me in that hatefully formal way. I made it a compact to travel with you for the first three years of your career and I shall do so. Any explanation of this sudden resolution is scarcely necessary. I saw what passed to-night. Play the man, old fellow. Your sweet little cousin played the woman well enough. She won't stay here long, therefore remain until you have fulfilled the purpose you had in view when we came. If you are going to be turned aside by every trivial accident that occurs your time and money will be thrown away for no ulterior benefit. Still, do not be guided by me."

"Thank you, Arthur; your advice is sound and reasonable. I will act upon it. Athens is large enough for us both. I can spare her and do my duty to myself. I will devote the next few days to sketching."

There was a melancholy satisfaction in the resolve to find occupation for his mind in work, and Arthur wondered how far he would keep to it.

Sidney began the next day, studiously avoiding the quarters where the countess would possibly be seen; but in the quiet of the evening he was prowling beneath the windows of the hotel, listening to her voice as she sang or the music when she played, or watching the outline of her elegant figure, while he passed to and fro in the deep shadows, meditatively smoking a fragrant cigar.

In the day he kept to his resolution, but each evening he became a solitary sentinel beneath the windows of the hotel which contained the idol of his boyhood's affection. He knew it was madness, but it was sweet madness, and that may be some excuse for him.

Lord Herbert was still a faithful and constant waiter, waiting upon the countess with the willing devotion of a slave. But he found his fair and lovely mistress a very gentle one. She was very happy of late, her old buoyancy of spirits returned, and she was looking forward with much gladness to the time when the earl would rejoin them.

He returned when she least expected it.

She had driven over one evening with Madame to visit one of the French families, Madame Le Comtesse Maillet, who was too indisposed to leave her bed.

When Lady Anne returned to the hotel Madame Marville retired straightway to her own apartment, and her ladyship entered the drawing-room as quietly as was her custom.

She almost uttered a startled cry.

There sat Dalyell with his back towards her, his head lowered, his arms turned upwards and the fingers of each hand pressed against each other. The attitude was that of one lost entirely in deep and apparently grave meditation.

She was still young and impulsive, and impulse carried her away.

She ran lightly up behind him and clasped both her tiny hands over his eyes.

"Who is it?" she said, bending down.

But instead of her lordly husband tenderly removing her hands and retaining them in his, he tore them down, throw them aside, and leapt up as if he had been shot.

Poor child! She recoiled with a low cry. There was something almost terrible in the gleam of his black eyes, the lowering of his blacker brows and the stonelike rigidity of his grayish-white face. He looked like a perfect demon as he confronted her, and she was fascinated as by the deadly glance of a snake.

CHAPTER XXI.

'Tis melancholy, and a fearful sign
Of human frailty, folly, also, time,
That love and marriage rarely pass com-
plicity,
Although they both are born in the very
self-same clime.
Marriage from love like vinegar from
wines,
A sad, sour, sober beverage—by time
Is sharpened from its high, celestial fla-
vour,
Down to a very homely household savour.
Byron.

THERE was an air of dangerous, deadly calmness in the earl's anger that, while it fascinated the fair young countess and held her dumb, it made her tremble.

What had she done?—what could it mean? Surely the simple, childish act she had just committed could never in itself raise such fiendish passion!

"Madam, for Heaven's sake I do not forget yourself in that way," he said, sternly. "Will you never remember that you are no longer a country girl, nor in a farmhouse amongst farmers? Will you never conquer your childishness, your ill-mannered fri-

volity? Am I to entrust you with the dignity of my honour and name, or shall I find you a playground and playmates? I always dreaded this miserable folly. I dread it—hate it more now that I have just reason to believe that it is the forerunner of sin."

The look that accompanied the three last words started into life a new terror in the fair young wife's beating heart.

"Why do you assume this guileless new thinking to hide your real nature and your dishonourable intentions from me?"

Dishonourable intentions! Poor child! She heard the words like one in a dream. What fearful meaning was at the bottom of all this? She could not speak, and the earl went on:

"So, my lady, brief as was the time that I was absent you must fill my house with your undesirable relations and harbour the disobedient son I have discarded. Have I given you rank and wealth that you should only use them to the dishonour of me and mine?"

"My lord, you do me a very great wrong. Heaven is my judge, I have never admitted our union by a thought, never. As I hope for redemption I swear it!"

"Madam, I do not wish to hear melodramatic speeches. The honour of the house of Dalyell is in your hands, and only if by so much as a breath of scandal and I send you forth disgraced, an outcast from society. Until your years of youthful folly are passed I shall keep you strictly under the care and guardianship of Madame Marville. When you are old and discreet enough to be mistress of my house I will come to have a mistress for you. Understand me clearly. I did not give you this position for you to gratify any girlish whim or vanity. The responsibilities of the Countess of Dalyell have devolved upon you, remember this, and never let me have a recurrence of your late unseemly behaviour. In three days I shall send you back to England, and be careful lest through your own fault I send you back to your parents."

"My lord, I am grieved and sorry. Forgive me. I will indeed try and not offend you again. Indeed, I will not."

Tears of bitter sorrow and repentance coursed down her now pallid cheeks, but Dalyell did not pause to say one kindly word. He took them as a just tribute to the outraged dignity of the house of Dalyell, and, with a cold and lofty air, strode out of the room, and, as Anne thought, out of the house.

She gave vent to her grief in tears then, sobbing as if her poor heart would break, with her face buried in her hands, and crouching down on the blue damask couch—oh! so miserable, so heart-chilled and desolate!

She did not hear a soft, hesitating step behind her, nor see Lord Herbert enter the drawing-room, nor know of his presence at all until a hand was laid gently on her shoulder, and another placed tenderly round her waist to raise her from her recumbent posture.

"My lady! what is the matter, Lady Dalyell?" said a low, impassioned voice. "My poor, simple child! Anne—sister, look up. Tell me what is the matter."

She recognized Lord Herbert's voice, and she went to him as a refuge from her bitter grief, and, resting her head on his expansive chest, sobbed out her sorrow there.

She felt his strong frame tremble and the hand that stroked back the rippling hair from her wet cheeks was hot and feverish.

"Speak to me, Anne. Tell me what is the cause of this. Who has upset you? Calm yourself, my darling child, calm yourself."

He took her closer to him and kissed her as a brother would—gently, reverently on the forehead.

"My child, do not go on so. Who has been here?"

"He, Warton. Have you not seen him?"

"I? No. But, in Heaven's name I implore you to tell me what he has said or done."

"Ah, my lord, ah, Herbert, do advise me. Do be kind to me, will you not?"

"Always," he said, fervently.

She calmed herself a little, and wiped away the tears; then she told him what had happened, how she had found the earl, her playful greeting and its results.

Lord Herbert turned ghastly pale, and looked down at the fair beauty with more pity than surprise in his glance.

He felt a dangerous sympathy for her then, she was more to him than such friendship as the earl, and he held her close to him in a gentle, protective, brotherly way.

"Warton is wrong," he said, earnestly, "badly wrong. I did not think that he would act like this so soon. It seems to me strange, inexplicable that Providence should give one so lovely and so good to a

man of his cold, unappreciative nature, while those who would love and cherish her as a priceless treasure are—

"Herbert!"

"Forgive me, my dear child. I mean no harm, no wrong. You have become to me dearer than a sister, and all that I pray for is the privilege of being to you as a brother always."

"What can I do, Herbert?"

"I know not, my poor child. Even to give you the best and purest brotherly advice is dangerous. It must be hard indeed for you to understand Warton's humours. Yet to humour them, to be patient and gentle till time shall change him, is all that I can advise. How deeply sorry I am for you, how deeply I deplore this blight upon your domestic happiness, I dare not trust myself to say. You are his wife, a sacred, solemnly sacred tie binds you to him for better or for worse, and even should your love for him cease your sense of duty will remain. Poor child, how barren your gentle heart must seem left alone in its cold, fruitless search for the love that should be your guide and comfort, your pillar of faith. Remember there is much wisdom in these words: Wait and hope. Patience and virtue must and will bring their own reward."

"I will be patient always, even if I am unhappy," answered the fair young countess, when a quick footstep made them both turn, to behold Delyell standing within the threshold of the door, glaring upon them with the fury of a demon.

Lord Herbert started and coloured slightly, then he drew himself proudly up, while Anne stood with her hands clasped, looking like a culprit waiting to receive sentence at the hands of her judges.

"Pray, my lord marquis," said Delyell, rigidly, "what is the meaning of this undue familiarity?"

"The meaning, my lord, is simple, and I trust a simple explanation will be sufficient to exonerate her ladyship from any blame. I cannot hear—"

Delyell put up his hand to stop him.

"Pray do not enter into any explanation here," he said. "It may be easy to exonerate you, sir, but I cannot find any argument to exonerate myself for leaving my house open unavoidably to friends even of your standing. I am sorry for this, Vynedon, it will part us for ever and separate myself and wife. I admit the temptation was strong, the thoughtlessness mine. We shall find place and opportunity for an explanation, no doubt. Shall I ring for your carriage?"

Delyell's attitude as he said this was so distinctly a command for Lord Herbert to quit the house that he could not disregard the hint.

"Delyell," he said, as he went, "I will go as you bid me, but remember this in your jealous anger, throw not a single slur upon your wife, who is as innocent of wrong against you as a saint. Your harshness she has returned with honour and respect, your callous-heartedness with love and patience. To its full extent has she in every thought and every act kept to the text of the sacred vow which made her Countess of Delyell. If you discard these words now, you may remember them in your warmer moments, and let them deter you from casting a slur upon her ladyship. I will see you to-morrow."

When he was gone Delyell rang for Madame Marville.

That lady saw at a glance that something terrible had happened.

"May I inquire, madame, how it comes about that I find my wife alone here in the company of Vynedon, between whom there is palpable familiarity?"

"My lord, I have not been absent from her ladyship one hour."

"It appears, madam, that you have betrayed the trust I reposed in you. However, listen to me for a moment, I shall only require you to fulfil one more duty, then I will relieve you of all farther responsibility. To-morrow you will take her ladyship to England and find a house or apartments for her," then added, turning to Anne: "You will understand I trust that from this night we must part. Silence, please. I will have no explanation now, that will come at the proper time."

The countess turned white and ghastly as death; so piteous and imploring was the look she cast upon him at that moment that even Madame felt a pang.

"In mercy's name," she cried, starting forward and dropping on her knees before him, "hear me, my lord, to save yourself and your honoured name from disgrace and public scandal. Hear me. I am innocent, so help me Heaven!"

"Tell that to the judges who shall hear you. I am resolved, and nothing but death could prevent me carrying out this determination. You have brought it on yourself. Was it for this that you entered into the alliance, to fulfil a life's ambition for rank and wealth? Did you seek this bargain that you might dishonour and bring to the dust him who has given it you?"

"My lord, hear me!" Anne cried, a sickening despair seizing her, and she clutched wildly at the skirts of his coat. "Hear me!"

"Never," he answered, striking down her slender hands. "You have heard my decision, madam. An agent will call upon Madame Marville in the morning."

He strode away, and the fair, beautiful, unhappy girl uttered a scream and fell a dead weight to the floor.

Scarcely had Delyell gone out of sight when the door was burst open and Sidney Cardiff, who had been at his solitary post, patrolling beneath the windows, rushed into the room.

He had heard the scream and recognized whom it came from.

Madame Marville had her young mistress's head pillowed in her lap. She looked up at Sidney without suspicion.

"Bring for assistance," she said, gently.

And Sidney obeyed, though he was half-frantic.

When the assistance came the countess was carried up to her bedroom.

Madame paused at the door and beckoned to Sidney.

"Go," she said, "and find his lordship; tell him to come back. I fear she is dying."

"Where is he? Heaven, what has the monster done?"

"Go and find him; bring him back."

"Ay, I will," said Sidney, with an awful gesture.

"He shall come back or I'll kill him."

CHAPTER XXII.

None so desolate but something dear,
Dearer than self, possesses or possesses.

Byron.

HAD Sidney Cardiff even for a moment have dreamt of the influence those words would have on his future destiny he never would have uttered them. They were heard and remembered by others long after he had forgotten them.

"If he will not come back I will kill him."

Madame Marville looked after Sidney, while the words were ringing in her ears, and she, perhaps wrongly, surmised that he would keep his word.

Sidney rushed madly into the street. Where was he to find Delyell. Who was to know where he had gone? He went from place to place inquiring of every one who could understand his French, with which he mixed up a considerable deal of Latin, thinking he was making it more intelligible.

He got a clue at last. It was vague enough, but he followed it and rambled out amidst the ruins in the shadowed streets of the city, striding after every form, real or fancied, that he saw, until the suspicious of a loitering guard was aroused, and he cautiously followed him in turn.

Twice he had been close upon Delyell's heels, and each time lost the scent, and at length he could see no one in sight.

The earl had strolled off in an aimless sort of way, to collect his thoughts and coolly think over the fancied calamity he thought had fallen upon him.

Unconsciously he had wandered towards the Temple of the Winds, in the ancient city of Athens, looking like most other relics of Athenian glory in the darkness of night. Perhaps he thought so, or perhaps he wondered why he had rambled here. Anyhow he paused, looked about him for a moment, and then, even while in the act of turning back, he fell into a deeper fit of abstraction than before, and remained stock still.

Darkness and silence were around him—a dreary, impressive solitude, amidst the haunts of the people of past ages—alone in a dismal forest of ruins, which was once so gay and redolent with life.

Vague, misshapen shadows stalked abroad, flitting from place to place and playing hide-and-seek in odd nooks and corners, as if the deserted ruins were peopled with the spirits of its ancient and almost forgotten race.

Had Delyell possessed Lord Herbert's poetical turn of mind he might have stood here in this almost sacred solitude and peopled those grim, broken structures, and for every shadow might have found a substance.

The sculptured figures on each side of the Temple of the Winds looked like things of life—even if spectre life.

But Delyell had no fanciful memory for these. He gazed in hard, stern silence upon the ruined structure and likened it to himself.

Surely this crumbling ruin was emblematical of the great house of Delyell, dishonoured now, tottering to its very base, threatening to fall in shame, crushing its proud upholders and leaving nothing but its former name and a profligate son for posterity.

How much of the work of destruction he had himself to answer for the cold, selfish earl never once reflected. He could trace, or would trace none of the evil that befell him to his own despotic will.

His own stern sense of justice was injustice, his implacable, unbending hauteur was despotism. He had all along turned a hard, smileless face to the world, and a heart within which all feelings died save pride—the stern, unnatural, aimless pride which kept his heart barren and his home desolate, which sent a young and lovely wife to the grave, and his only child from him, and now threatened to wreck all that was dear to the fair young creature who had gone to him for love and protection made sacred by the bonds of Hymen.

Surely Delyell must have thought something of this now. It is hard to conjecture. His thoughts may have run apace but they were unexpressed even in the faintest breathed whisper, lest those grim, misshapen shadows should seize it up and bear it away. How they hovered about him, sighing now as if in solemn triumph, floating around him even when voices broke the dull stillness and found an echo through the heavy air.

Some one had joined Delyell. Stern and high words were exchanged. Their purport is a secret in the keeping of one person only and the shadowy sentinels of the ruin. They, the grim, misshapen shadows, might have heard—heard when words came low and fierce, a sharp, agonized cry, such a cry as a stern, Heaven-ant-earth-defying man would utter when struck down unto death in the height of the vanity of his own greatness and infallibility.

Surely these grim, misshapen shadows heard, and saw as they flitted and hovered over a still form. Death was in the midst of that awe-inspiring solitude now. A stern, relentless face, with the weight of the universe removed from its lowered brow, was upturned with a look upon it as if it had been startled with awful terror and then turned into stone.

The mysterious stars peeped shyly forth and streamed down a tender light of seeming pity upon that stone-like face and still form, with a sharp, silent dagger in its heart, taking the life it did not want and wasting the blood it could not imbibe; willing and unfair instrument of man's evil passion, it had done its work. The stars might peep on in their silent, mysterious way; the grim, misshapen shadows still linger; the statues look down with their cold gray faces, but they could not move that ghastly thing at the foot of the Temple of the Winds. It was all that was left of the Earl of Delyell.

Before the sun had risen very high in the heavens all Athens rang with the cry of murder. It reached the hotel where the countess lay ill, but it had no interest for her.

Madame Marville came with the news fresh upon her.

"There has been a murder, my lady, and they say it's an Englishman, a nobleman."

Lady Delyell started up then. An Englishman murdered! The colour faded from her cheeks and her heart sank chilled. A dreadful thought best her: What if Delyell in his mad fury had met Lord Herbert and murdered him?

"Ring for my maid, madame, please," she said, hastily, "I will dress at once."

"Let me assist you, my lady," volunteered Madame Marville, but while she was speaking a maid-servant entered the room.

"My lady," she said, hurriedly, "the Marquis of Vynedon is below; he begs that you will see him at once."

The countess started, and a sigh of relief escaped her. The next moment she went pale again; she could not crush out the besetting thought that the murdered Englishman was connected with her.

She hastily donned a maroon dressing-gown, faced and lined with pale blue satin, and fastened round her slender waist with a blue silk and silver cord girdle, fastened her luxuriant hair up with a large comb and hastened down to Lord Herbert, having already despatched Madame to say that she would not keep him long, and in order also that the interview should not take place without a witness.

She perceived at once that he was deadly pale, and the sadness of his voice mingled strangely with the look of almost horror and dread that was on his handsome face.

"My lady," he said, taking her hand quietly—his own trembled and was hot to fever heat, "I come to deliver dreadful news. I trust that you will try and bear it, and—what must follow. Something has happened to Delyell and they are bringing him here."

Anne put the disengaged hand to her brow and glanced up at him with a helpless, stunned expression, so that he paused with the sentence incomplete, fearing that she would fall. But, by that great mental force peculiar to women, which enables them to bear up under very great and sudden shocks, when some men would break down, she kept her senses, though

her fearless, heart-sickenng agony and horror were but too painfully manifest.

"Warton!" she said, in such a tone as an actress might assume, but which sounded blood-curdling, coming as it did born of real sorrow, "Warton murdered! Tell me who—"

She would have asked who did it, but a slow, solemn tramp outside the hotel and the dull murmuring of a curious and not unsympathetic crowd brought rudely home to her the fact of her widowhood and the dread evidence of that horrid deed.

The taint of blood seemed to reach her nostrils, and livid spots danced before her eyes. She could see the ghastly sight in her appalled imagination—a horror for one so young and so gentle. The shock that was inevitable to so delicate an organization came now. She sent up a shrill cry and swooned.

The slow, solemn tramp continued, coming nearer and growing slower, and that ghastly thing—all that was left of pomp and pride, so great in self-esteem in life, so little now—was carried silently to its snow-white bier, and rough hands covered it up from sight and left it to the darkened solitude which screens the solemn, sacred atmosphere of death; and that darkened solitude was only broken when the pallid, stricken son crept in alone, and stood bareheaded by the then-uncovered face of the dead man, stood in fearless, silent grief, all his levity gone, and gone for ever.

"Oh, my father," he murmured, kneeling in humble, simple prayer, "if thou hadst but seen how thy pride and grandeur were but a dream, would thy life have ended thus. We parted in anger, but I had forgiven thee long since. Heaven grant that thy vainglorious life may be forgiven in the everlasting hereafter—that this dreadful end to thy vain life may be a warning and a guide to me also, now alone in the world, my father, and with the anger of thy pride still ringing in my ears. Oh, Heaven, have mercy upon our sinful ways."

Tears came now, and the small white hand was laid reverently on the cold, hard brow, for who can help but reverence the dead? A brief, earnest prayer was offered up for the salvation of that man's soul, that man who had thought too much of himself in life to think of Him who had given him that life; and when Lord Arthur rose to his feet he was a changed man, sorrowful but calm, looking back on the past with a shudder, but turning his face to the bright light of hope which burned even now in the future as a guiding star in the firmament to the nearly lost warrior.

How quiet and subdued, almost humbled, he went back to Lord Herbert. With what simple earnestness he took his hand, while choking down a sob that he might speak!

"Herbert, don't leave me," he said. "Help me over this. I shall want a friend's advice, a friend's help."

"You shall have them, dear Arthur, always from me. Stay, you will be wanted here to comfort your stepmother, and it is better for you both, for us all, that I should do those things that must be done. Tell me, was robbery the object—"

"No; no property is missing, save the earl's opal pin."

"And no clue to the—"

"No," answered Lord Arthur, sadly. "Poor Sidney is arrested for it. He was found near, or standing over the body, but I believe him to be innocent, as innocent as you or I."

"We will not talk of it now. Will you inquire how her ladyship is before I go?"

Arthur rang the bell, and when an attendant arrived despatched him with a message to Madame Marville. The answer that came was encouraging. The countess was conscious, and would probably recover in a few hours.

Lord Herbert went then to see after the last duties due to the remains of the earl.

Later in the day a telegram was sent to the officials of Scotland Yard, and an inspector with two detectives were despatched at once for Athens.

When they arrived the countess was prepared to start for England with her sad burden. She had grown sorrowfully calm by that time.

Arthur met the inspector and detailed the sad affair to him.

A note of the loss of the opal scarf-pin was at once made.

"You do not think, my lord, that robbery was the cause?"

"No," answered Arthur. "But I do not believe Mr. Cardiff to be the guilty person."

"We must see the authorities, sir, and the prisoner too."

"I shall be happy to assist you."

The inspector very shrewdly sifted the matter as it stood and was perplexed.

The evidence was very black against Sidney. The guard, who had followed him into the old city had found him leaning over the body of the earl; blood was on his hand, but his hand was not on or near the dagger. The opal scarf-pin was missing too, and could not be found.

There was a mystery here!

(To be continued.)

MADGE, THE MARTYR.

"Twas a dirty, miserable room in a dilapidated building. The walls were black, the windows nearly devoid of glass. An ancient table occupied the centre of the apartment; on the right of this, looking from the entrance, was the grate; beyond was a screen, behind this was a cot bed. On the other side of the room stood a threadbare lounge, which, with a few chairs and a cheap clock, completed the furnishings of this squalid abode.

The table, on which stood a candle, was set with a few dishes containing corned beef and bread, rum, and tobacco.

Anon a woman came from behind the screen, a woman with long black hair, a pale, cadaverous face, and large hazel eyes preternaturally bright.

She listened a moment to the howling of the wind, and the rushing eddies of snow that beat against the windows and sifted in at the crevices. Shivering slightly, she caught up an old shawl and wound it around her shoulders.

"It is a bitter cold night!" she mused, dropping upon a chair near the stove, and resting her chin upon her hands. "Jake is late—it's past eleven!"

At that instant the outside door was violently pushed open—the snow whirled in, and with it came a stalwart, repulsive-looking man enveloped in a large cloak with a felt hat pulled down over his brow.

The woman threw aside her shawl, and started up to meet him. Glancing anxiously over his shoulder, the man said, gruffly:

"Look the door, Madge—quick!"

"Some more evil work, I suppose," she whispered, as she proceeded to obey.

"What are ye muttering about? Come here, I tell ye."

She returned and stood before him, her bony arms locked across her breast, and her eyes shining fearlessly.

His shaggy brows contracted, and he shook his head menacingly; then, with an unintelligible growl, he took a bundle from under his cloak and held it towards her.

"Take care of it—keep it still, do you hear? What are ye looking at?"

"Why, it's a baby!" said the woman, a singular tenderness creeping into her voice.

A horrible oath escaped his lips.

"A baby? Supposing it is, what of it? Did you never see one before?"

"Ay, too many, too many that have come here to find a grave, but none so pretty as this—"

"Hush!" he said. "Sit down now and keep the kid quiet while I eat."

The woman obeyed, but her eyes followed him with reproach and loathing; and then sought the velvety face of the babe with a sympathy that she could not account for even to herself.

The little creature was sleeping sweetly, and its chubby hands were grasping the neck of its night-dress.

Madge darted a quick glance at her companion to see that he was not watching her, and pressed a warm kiss upon the smooth white brow.

A strange thrill went through her nature—chords that had not been struck for years vibrated in answer to the influence that emanated from that innocent child; and Madge saw clearly over the black waste of her life—saw its horrors—saw its crimes and trembled under the weight of guilt and fear that was suddenly let down upon her soul. Unconsciously a faint groan passed her lips.

"What, in the name of the fiend, ails you to-night?" demanded Jake, turning in his chair and glowering upon her angrily.

"I was in a doze and dreaming, I think!" she answered, with a yawn.

"I believe yer lying!" he muttered, suspiciously, and after watching her a moment, he renewed his attack on the corned beef.

Madge did not bend over the child again, but allowed her eyes to rest upon it a moment at a time. Presently the little cherub awoke, and the degraded woman caught her breath as she beheld those heavenly blue eyes upraised to hers. What was coming over her? Never, during a long career of crime, had she experienced such feelings as now throbbed in her heart.

The very glance of that helpless infant seemed to turn her against herself—to pierce her hardened

nature and awaken emotions that had long lain dormant. She tried to scoff at the change, but just then the babe reached up and clasped one of her fingers in its fat hand, and smiled—such a peaceful, angelic smile that it seemed to this poor creature like a glimpse of Heaven.

"I'll save you, yes, I will!" she thought, trying to keep the tears from her eyes. "I'll do one good act before I die! Oh, Heaven! how I have lived—but stop—I must not think! I cannot change the past, but I may improve the present—I may blot out a few of my wicked deeds, by one good act?"

"Dreaming again, are ye?" howled Jake, kicking his chair back. "Here, give me the kid—I'm off."

"Wait till I get him asleep. Take your pipe and smoke a minute," she said, to gain time, for her thoughts were confused and she knew not how to act.

"The brat'll sleep before morning, I reckon," replied Jake, with an awful laugh, as he put on his coat. "Give it to me now."

"What are you going to do with it?" she asked, quietly, though her every nerve was throbbing with excitement.

"What's that to you? Shut your mouth, and hand over the kid, or it'll be the worse for you!"

He stepped forward to take the child from her arms.

Springing to one side, she clutched the carrying-knife from the table and assumed an attitude of defence. Her face was blanched now, her eyes glared, her lips quivered with her fast-coming breath.

Stupefied for an instant with amazement, Jake stood motionless.

"You would murder this child, and for what? Not because it has hurt you, for it couldn't, it is helpless, but because you have been paid for it," ejaculated Madge, in a voice of intense clearness. "You would make it cold and still, you would stop its little breath; but you shall not—no you shall not! I see my life as it is—I feel the burning pangs of remorse in my heart! Stand back! At last I am desperate!"

Great drops of sweat stood out on Jake's brow, the cords of his face swelled with rage. Uttering a blood-freezing oath, he pounced upon her with clenched fist.

She evaded him, laughing wildly.

"I fight for innocence, and truth—for once! for once!" she articulated, brandishing the knife in his face.

"Curse you—curse you for a traitorous wench! Give me the kid, give him to me, before I kill you!"

He caught at her hair and she pulled it away, leaving a score of black strands in his grasp.

"Never, Jack Hurley, never! I am your slave no longer!"

"Curse you, I'll—"

The words left his lips in seething accents, and his brawny hand closed over her throat. She gasped for breath, and then concentrating all her strength, struck a furious blow at his heart.

The knife was buried to the hilt in his body—the warm blood coaxed out—he staggered—uttered a succession of blasphemous words and caught at the table to support himself.

Madge started back with the child in her arms, her face deathly pale with horror and a fright, her body trembling.

"You've done it, you accursed witch—you've settled me, but I'll—I'll have one more chance at you!"

He sprang forward, wrenched the knife from his side and sought to stab her, but his strength failed, the blood spouted from his wound in streams, and he fell forward upon his face.

Still held motionless by the appalling spectacle, still enchained by her dreadful thoughts, Madge remained silent, gazing upon her dying companion.

By an effort Jake rolled over upon his side, and turned his wild eyes upon her, while his facial muscles twitched nervously and his teeth grated.

"Forgive me! oh, forgive me, Jake!" cried Madge, breaking forth from her terror sufficiently to speak. "I did it only to save the child. You would have killed him! I could not let you—oh, for Heaven's sake, forgive me!"

"I curse you!—ay, I'll—"

A light of demoniac exultation flashed over his face, and with his fast-departing strength he drew a revolver from his pocket and fired at her. At that instant she knelt in supplication to him—the ball passed over her head, and when the smoke cleared away he saw her sitting unharmed before him. He could not lift the pistol again—his last moment had come.

Madge now sprang up in alarm, and grasping her shawl, threw it around herself and the child.

"I must not be found here!" she exclaimed. "The

police will be here in an instant! Heavens! what a night this is! I have killed Jake, but—but I have saved the child!"

Unlocking the door, she rushed out into the storm, and crossing the street, kept in the shadow of the building. How the cold wind whistled through her thin garments! how fiercely the snow beat against her face! But she cared not if the child was only warm! It seemed indeed as if Providence had favoured her. Through all that dreadful scene the child had not awoken, and even when the pistol flashed and thundered so close to it, the babe had only opened its eyes, and never offered to cry.

Onward towards the better portion of the city, through the driving storm Madge pursued her way, not knowing where to go, not daring to ask for shelter lest blood should be discovered upon her, and yet knowing that to keep life in her she must keep moving.

At length, weary and shivering with cold, she found herself near a church. The temptation to sit down upon the steps was strong, but she resisted it, and moved slowly on towards the park.

Passing under the gaslight, she took a look at the child.

The little darling was cuddled close to her breast, and apparently very comfortable.

"It wasn't wrong to sacrifice an unfeeling man like Jake that a little babe might live, was it?" she mused. "No, I know it wasn't. Why, Jake would have killed the baby, and I couldn't save the baby without killing Jake, could I? No, no! Heaven knows I tried to do right. Heaven will be merciful to me. Oh, dear! how sleepy I am! how soft the snow looks! but I won't lie down. Baby, baby! Yes, I must keep awake for baby's sake!"

Pressing her cold hand to her brow, she staggered on. Each moment that wooing drowsiness was growing stronger. At last she could withstand it no longer, but creeping up on the uppermost step of an elegant mansion, she wrapped baby close in the shawl and pressed it to her breast. Then with a faint murmur she lapsed into slumber.

In the morning she was found frozen as rigid as iron, but the babe was warm, and opened its little eyes as the kind-hearted rescuers lifted it.

Madge had been wicked, Madge had defied all laws religious and moral; but the last act of her life was nobly, grandly heroic! She sacrificed herself that the babe—no kith or kin of hers, and with no claim upon her save that inspired by common humanity—might live.

She could easily have disposed of it—she could have crept into some hovel of her friends', and saved herself at the expense of the child; but she refused the temptation—ay, scorned it, and met the cold storm and colder death face to face without a murmur, without a regret.

Why was she not "Madge the Martyr?"

Three minutes after Madge left the scene of the tragedy, one of the neighbours came in and found the remains of Jake.

The alarm was spread at once, and the room was full of gaping spectators. Presently the police appeared, and took charge of the body until the coroner, who had been sent for, should come.

The inquest, held on the following morning, developed nothing. The finding of Madge's body, with the bloodstains upon the dress, aroused a suspicion, and was connected inferentially with the death of Jake; but beyond that the affair remained a mystery, and after two or three notices in the public press was forgotten.

The babe was taken care of by the family at whose door it was found, and the little creature soon crept so deeply into their hearts, that they adopted her as their own.

Years passed, and the child grew in sweetness of disposition and physical beauty, and evinced talents of a high order.

'Twas a darkened room in an elegant mansion. On a luxurious couch reclined a young man, his wild eyes rolled upward, his attenuated cheeks flushed red, and his pale lips just parted. At intervals he flung his arms violently about, and groaned most piteously.

By his bedside sat a tall, fine-looking man, somewhat past the middle age. As the patient grew restless, the watcher placed his hand upon his brow, and sought to quiet him.

"My poor boy," he mused anon. "My poor, dear boy! how he suffers!"

"I would do it over again!" suddenly cried the youth, sitting up in bed and gazing around the world with frenzy in his eyes. "She was not my own sister—no—no—only the child of my stepmother! Ugh! how I hate that name! Who are you? You needn't laugh at me—you can't frighten me—nobody can frighten me! Come on, one at a time, and see how I will tear you to pieces!"

He clenched his fists and shook them at the imaginary beings of his delirium, while his eyes rolled and gleamed, and his teeth grated as if they would grind themselves to powder.

With a sigh of compassion, his father arose to administer a quieting medicine; but the patient waved him back, and then, with a sly, crafty expression on his face, began talking again.

"Come here, and I'll tell you all about it. You won't tell my father, will you? Ha, ha! I know you won't. He loves his wife, I suppose; but see here, she isn't my mother, is she? No—no! and I hate her! I hated the babe she gave life to! Was it my sister when my mother was in the grave?"

He clutched his hair with his hands, the muscles stood out on his face, his eyes dilated and shone like coals of fire.

"I have always suspected this," murmured his father, in a voice quivering with grief; "but I never dreamed it had taken so strong a hold of him! It is exaggerated by his delirium, of course—I'll not let it trouble me—I must not!"

"Was I fool enough to let the child grow up and have my rights—mine?" continued the sufferer, in a wailing voice, while his hands moved slowly to and fro. "No, I hope not! I'm not quite a fool—not quite! Stella called her. Stella went away one night, didn't she? Where did she go? Ha, ha! where? Jake is dead—Jake can't tell!"

"Heaven! can it be possible? Is this raving, or is it truth?"

A terrible chill settled upon the father's heart, his face grew ghastly with the awful suspicion that burned in his mind! Sinking into a chair, he tried to argue the phantom away, but it lingered to torture him.

"The old woman never suspected me," laughed the invalid, working his fingers together. "I deceived her, and that was enough! Oh, no! no half-sisters for me!"

"It is true! Oh, Father, forgive him!" moaned Robert Ashley, kneeling by the couch and clasping his hands.

Seventeen years had passed since the tragedy, and thirteen years since Robert Ashley learned from the lips of his delicious son a truth so terrible that he felt a great relief when that son was laid to rest beneath the grass of the cemetery.

The Burrington family were assembled in their magnificent drawing-room, which looked out upon the park. Every face was grave and every heart was heavy.

Richard Burrington, after a successful career of thirty years as a merchant, was now on the verge of failure, and without either health, strength or energy to commence the battle of life anew. His son Ralph, a young physician, just gathering a small practice, was in no condition to help his father. As to asking assistance from his brother merchants, Richard Burrington could not endure the thought of it; his pride rebelled against the idea. The only course left for him was to surrender his beautiful home, where he had lived so long, and go into a smaller house. It hurt him to ask this sacrifice of his wife and daughter, but there was no help for it. Sighing deeply, he looked up, and was about to speak, when Violet arose, placed one little hand upon his shoulder, and said, gently:

"Don't feel sad, dear papa; I am going to help you."

"You, Violet?" said Mrs. Burrington and her son, in a breath.

"Yes," turning her bright blue eyes from one to the other. "What is there that you have not done for me? Finding me a lone waif at the portals of your home, you took me in, loved me, cared for me, educated me, and made me your own in heart. Can I forget this? Heaven forbid!"

"Bless her heart!" murmured the old man, dashing a tear from his eye, while Walter gazed upon her with love and admiration.

"I've tried to remember how much I owe to you," Violet continued, in a low voice, "and I wish now I had been more prudent. You have given me money lavishly, dear papa, in all these years, and for the last seven years I have saved a little. There are one thousand pounds, dear papa, and yesterday I sold my diamonds, which brought a thousand more—there it is, and, oh, I am so thankful to give it to you!"

"Heaven bless you, you little angel!" said the merchant, pressing her to his breast. "I can keep on my feet a little while longer now. Who would have thought a child could have used such foresight?"

"But, papa, I've got a position as companion to a very wealthy lady, and I shall have three hundred pounds a year, if she likes me."

"But you must not go, my darling."

"No, no, Violet. I can't let you go!" said Walter, coming forward, and taking her hand.

She blushed, and dropped her eyes.

"It will save expense if I go, and papa must re-trench," she said, with quiet firmness. "Besides, I want to do all I can. You must let me go."

"Robert," said Mrs. Ashley, in her languid way, "the young lady who answered my advertisement is in the sitting-room. I like her appearance very much; she is highly educated and very refined. She speaks French and German fluently, is an excellent reader, and plays the harp and guitar, in addition to being a splendid pianist. And she is only eighteen. Isn't she a marvel?"

"I should think she was, my dear," replied Mr. Ashley, mechanically.

"Then you will go down and hear her play, won't you?" said the lady, pouting.

"Certainly, my love," he answered, listlessly.

They passed down to the sitting-room together. Violet was seated on a divan, her cheeks flushed with excitement, her eyes sparkling like stars, and her ruby lips just parted, revealing her pearly teeth.

Robert Ashley paused abruptly as he beheld this lovely picture, and stood for a moment gazing upon her in admiration. Somehow her wondrous eyes seemed to look straight into his breast.

Recovering his self-possession, he greeted her politely, and then escorted his wife to an easy-chair. Declining to sit, he leaned over the back of the fauteuil, and fixed his eyes on Violet.

"We will hear you on the harp," said Mrs. Ashley, waving her hand towards Violet.

The maiden took her position by the instrument, and ran her fingers over the strings, producing music so sweet and soft that Robert Ashley sighed with delight.

As she concluded, he advanced to her side, and in a voice strangely tremulous, requested her to give him her history.

She complied with a gentle grace.

He listened as one in a dream—compared the date of her rescue by Richard Burrington with the date of Stella's loss, and felt a wild hope rising in his heart.

Then he astonished her by requesting her to lift her right sleeve.

Wondering at his agitation, she complied, and he examined her right elbow with pale face and fastly coming breath.

Then, darting towards his wife he cried, in a husky voice:

"'Tis she—'tis Stella! our child!"

Mrs. Ashley grew pale with mingled hope and fear, and rushing towards the astounded Violet, eagerly looked at her arm. Yes, there was the scar of a burn she had sustained only a month before her loss!

Wild with joy, the mother clasped her long-lost child to her breast, and imprinted kiss after kiss upon her face and neck and arms.

Violet sat motionless in a delicious, yet oppressive suspense.

"Thank Heaven! Thank Heaven! This removes the stain of guilt from my boy's soul!" murmured Robert Ashley, devoutly, but he did not know that, had it not been for Madge, his boy would have been a murderer.

Three days later Richard Burrington received the following letter:

"My dear papa,—Oh, I am so happy, and yet my happiness is so strange. I have found my real parents, but I shall never love you any less. My real papa says you are his brother from this hour, and he sends you a cheque for four thousand pounds. You won't fail now, will you? Tell Walter that he may set the day for our marriage now, when he pleases."

Walter lost no time, you may be sure. W. G. E.

THE Metropolitan Board of Works has signed a nice cheque, one for 497,000*l.*, in favour of the Duke of Northumberland for the purchase of Northumberland House; a paltry 5,000*l.* or so was also required of the Board to meet the expenses in the matter, and the purchase of two little houses in Northumberland Court. The hole to the Thames will commence in about three months, and the view of the river from Charing Cross will be something for the oldest inhabitant to stare at—when he sees it.

EXCESSIVE WATER-DRINKING.—There is no habit which is so disposed to grow upon one as that of drinking. Even water-drinking, apparently so harmless, becomes, with some people, a most pernicious habit; they cannot exert themselves in any way without drinking water; they are regularly in the habit of drinking many glasses of water daily between meals. This habit is an injurious one; it gently weakens the digestive power, hastens waste, and very probably tends to produce corpulence. Unfortunately, however, water-drinking is far less fre-

quently a habit than beer-drinking, which, in quantities very far short of intoxication, is much more injurious. By water-drinking we dilute our tissues; by beer-drinking we contaminate them.

From whatever cause, the climate of Great Britain is changing. The most noticeable fact is that, while the winters are less severe, and the summers not so intensely hot, as formerly, there has crept in what may be called a jumble of weather throughout the year. We have cold when we should expect heat, and warmth when we have every reason to look for snow. Meteorologists, who profess to speak scientifically, fail to enlighten us on the cause or causes of these phenomena. It cannot be said that, as regards the culture of grain crops, or the rearing of cattle, sheep, and other marketable animals, there has been any falling off. In these departments of affairs, and we may add in the forest culture, there has rather been an improvement than otherwise.

SCIENCE.

A NEW method of casting statues in bronze is reported as having been discovered by a Venetian founder, named Giordani. The advantage of the method consists in the cast being effected in a single operation, no matter how large the model, or how complicated in its forms. A Leda cast by this process is now being exhibited in Venice.

THE MONSTER GUN.—The steel block for the inner tube of the 50-ton gun, the manufacture of which is exciting so much interest, has arrived at Woolwich Arsenal, from the works of Messrs. Frith, of Sheffield. It is supposed to be the largest piece of steel ever cast, being 25 feet in length, and 35 inches in diameter at the thickest end. Its weight is about 12 tons.

A PREVENTIVE FOR LEAD POISON.—Any soluble salt of lime (if plaster of Paris or gypsum is used, there should be added a little saltpetre or sal ammoniac) in the most minute quantity prevents the oxidation of lead in contact with water. Therefore it would be well to put a little chalk into wells which have leaden pipes, also in leaden beer pipes and other conduits, if people will use them. Perhaps it would be better to dip leaden pipes in a moderate solution of sulphuric acid (oil of vitriol) before using, and to dip the common soldered tin cans for fruit in the same, in order to form an insoluble coating of sulphate of lead. For, all wiseacres to the contrary, every good chemist knows that lead is easily oxidized by pure water, and still more so by water containing carbonic acid; and since lead is a cumulative poison, a very little of it at a time, taken into the system for weeks, months, or years, will be sure to produce some ugly disease, like neuralgia, painter's colic, hardened liver, or paralysis, the frequent foe of the aged.

The difficulty of lighting railway carriages with gas has hitherto been found insurmountable—at least for journeys of great length. In the first place the ordinary gas reservoir was too cumbersome, and even if this defect had been met by pumping the gas into strong retorts under pressure, so as to carry it in a smaller space, the lighting power would have been considerably impaired. Herr Julius Plinius, of Berlin, has now mastered the difficulty. He abandons coal gas altogether, and makes his gas from oil. He packs it in iron retorts at a pressure of 90 lbs. to the square inch, and supplies it to the lamps through an ingenious regulator. Some few of the Continental railways have already adopted this system of lighting. In England an experimental carriage has been fitted with it on the London and North-Western Railway, and has been running some weeks. It carries gas enough in a receiver, made of wrought-iron, three-eighths of an inch thick, 5 ft. 10 in. long, and 1 ft. 4 in. in diameter, to run twice to Holyhead and back, sufficient gas being left for a farther run to Chester, if necessary. In other words, the carriage carries gas for over 1,000 miles.

IMPROVEMENTS IN BLEACHING.

A FRENCH chemist, M. Pierre Isidore David, has invented the following processes:

Chlorine in the gaseous state is produced in a closed receptacle by one of the ordinary methods, for example, by the action of an acid on chloride of lime diluted with water, and is conveyed by a tube into a chamber containing the articles to be bleached, the sides of such chamber being constructed of a transparent material in order to permit the entrance of light, which assists considerably the process of decolorization. After an interval, varying with the nature of the articles to be bleached, he sends into the chamber a rapid current of carbonic acid gas, obtained by any of the well-known processes. The apparatus in which the carbonic acid is generated communicates, however, with a vessel containing liquid ammonia, the fumes of which combine with the carbonic acid, and are conveyed into the chamber, where the two gases neutralize the hydro-

chloric acid, and accelerate the decolorization of the materials contained therein. The ammonia should be contained in a vessel of such a shape that the evaporation surface of the liquid can be augmented or diminished according to the quantity of chlorine employed.

In the second process, permanganate is obtained by the action of peroxide or binoxide of manganese on lime aided by heat, preferably in the following manner: One part by weight of peroxide of manganese and three parts of quicklime in powder are mixed together and submitted to a red heat for about three hours. When the heat has been continued for one hour, however, a rapid current of carbonic acid is passed through the mixture and continued till the completion of the process, the object being to superoxidize the compound. The permanganate of lime thus prepared is placed in a closed receptacle, which communicates by a tube with the bleaching chamber, commercial sulphuric acid is gradually added, and "ozonized oxygen" is evolved. In order to accelerate the evolution of this gas, the inventor adds a vegetable acid in quantity equal to the oil of vitriol, acetic acid being preferably used.

In the third process, M. David employs phosphorus and acetic acid. The production of ozone by means of phosphorus in a moist atmosphere is well known, but the quantity thus obtained is very small. By causing air which has been previously forced through acetic acid to bubble through the water containing the phosphorus, the patents has discovered that the quantity of ozone is considerably increased. The ozone is conveyed to the bleaching chamber in the same manner as before described, the air being forced through the liquids by means of a fan or any other of the well known methods of obtaining a current either by pressure or exhaust.

The fourth process consists in the use of chalk, alum and sulphuric acid. A saturated solution of alum is prepared at a temperature of 140-160 degrees Fah., into which powdered chalk is thrown, about equal in weight to the alum employed; sulphuric acid is then added, and the gas evolved is conveyed by a tube to the bleaching chamber, where it effects the desired object.

It will be seen that in three of the four processes chlorine is dispensed with, and the formation of hydrochloric acid avoided. When the articles are removed from the bleaching chamber, it is desirable to expose them for a time to the action of the atmosphere in order to remove the characteristic smell of ozone. These processes are claimed by M. David to be applicable to the decolorization of raw or worked materials, especially those which from their shape or nature do not admit of immersion in liquid; they are also specially adapted to the bleaching of books, papers and engravings. Oils and fatty matters may be decolorized by them; alcoholic liquids may be "improved" or "aged," as it is called, by the oxidizing properties of the ozone; fermentation may be arrested and unpleasant flavours removed; and they may be speedily converted into vinegar or acetic acid. M. David asserts that his processes will be found more economical than those in use.

NEW METHOD OF COLOURING METALS.

METALS may be coloured quickly and cheaply by forming on their surface a coating of a thin film of a sulphide. In five minutes brass articles may be coated with any colour, varying from gold to copper red, then to carmine, dark red, and from light aniline blue to a blue white, like sulphide of lead, and at last a reddish white, according to the thickness of the coat, which depends on the length of time the metal remains in the solution used. The colours possess a very good lustre, and if the articles to be coloured have been thoroughly cleaned by means of acids and alkalis, they adhere so firmly that they may be operated upon by the polishing steel.

To prepare the solution dissolve $1\frac{1}{2}$ ounces of hypo-sulphite of soda in 1 pound of water, and add $1\frac{1}{2}$ ounces of acetate of lead dissolved in $\frac{1}{2}$ a pound of water. When this clear solution is heated to from 190 to 210 degrees Fah., it decomposes slowly, and precipitates sulphide of lead in brown flakes. If metal is now present a part of the sulphide of lead is deposited thereon, and according to the thickness of the deposited sulphide of lead, the above colours are produced. To produce an even colouring the articles must be evenly heated. Iron treated with this solution takes a steel-blue colour; zinc, a brown colour; in the case of copper objects, the first gold colour does not appear; lead and zinc are entirely indifferent.

If, instead of the acetate of lead, an equal weight of sulphuric acid is added to the hypo-sulphite of soda, and the process carried on as before, the brass is covered with a very beautiful red, which is followed by a green (which is not in the first-mentioned scale of colours), and changes finally to a splendid brown, with green and red inter-glitter.

This last is a very durable coating, and may find special attention in manufactures, especially as some of the others are not very permanent.

Very beautiful marble designs can be produced by using a lead solution thickened with gum tragacanth, on brass which has been heated to 310 degrees Fah., and is afterwards treated by the usual solution of sulphide of lead. The solution may be used several times.

LOVE'S DREAM AND REALITY;

OR, THE HOUSE OF SECRETS.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Mrs. SINGLETON was on the watch all that morning, and was plunged into deep wonderment on learning that Mrs. Halstead had ordered the carriage for a drive. This was increased when she came down dressed for the excursion, and accompanied by the stranger guest.

The inquisitive matron intercepted her in the hall with a volley of questions affecting anxiety for her health.

Mrs. Halstead, calm with entire self-possession, merely said she was going to take a drive, which she had no doubt would help to restore her strength. She did not introduce the stranger; but Mrs. Singleton, who ran to the window, saw that she gave precedence in entering the carriage to the tall lady, treating her as an honoured visitor.

The coachman had been directed to drive to the house of Colonel Atherton.

Arrived there they asked for Miss Atherton and the colonel, and were shown into the drawing-room.

In a few moments the lady entered. She was plainly attired, but no simplicity of attire could hide her magnificent beauty. The soft eyes of Clarice, fixed on her face, turned instantly to her mother's. The likeness was not to be mistaken, nor was the resemblance to herself less startling. She stood gazing on her, unable to utter a word.

"Colonel Atherton?" the elder woman said.

"My father is not at home," answered the clear, musical voice of Florence. "But I expect him soon. Will you sit down? I did not hear the name—or my servant forgot to mention it. I believe this is Mrs. Halstead. I am happy to see you."

Extending her hand she approached Clarice, who stood quite motionless.

"If your father were here," said the elder woman, "he would tell you that I have fulfilled my promise. Florence Atherton, I have brought your sister to see you."

"My sister?"

"Your sister Clarice. Do you not remember her?"

"I remember you now, Florence," said Mrs. Halstead, clasping the offered hand in both her own. "We were young children when we were parted; but your face is now so familiar that I wonder I did not recognize you the first time I saw you."

Florence looked bewildered from one to the other. Then she kissed Clarice on both cheeks.

"I do not recollect your looks so well as you do mine," she said.

"You are younger than myself."

"And this lady—is she my mother? I ought to know her."

"I am your mother," Mrs. Atherton replied. "But I have not acted a mother's part towards you, Florence. My heart was wrapped up in my eldest child. I would not see you till I had found her."

"And this is indeed my sister!" Florence cried, with charming grace, after she had greeted her unknown mother, turning to Clarice; "I remember her name was—Clarice. Oh, how glad papa will be!"

"She is not his child. Her father died before she was born—before I met your father," the woman said, with some bitterness in her tone.

"But he will be glad to see you, madame. You are the mother of both of us."

"I am the unhappy mother of both. I am glad to see you, child, though I wish I could have died before this meeting."

Staggering backward, overcome by the struggle of her feelings, she grasped the back of a chair, but would have fallen had not Clarice caught her in her arms.

Florence came to assist in supporting her to the sofa, where a violent fit of coughing seized her, and left her utterly exhausted.

Her younger daughter rang the bell and ordered some wine to be brought in, asking if she should not send for a physician.

"It would be of no use," the poor woman said, trying to lift herself up. "My fate is sealed. I knew I had not long to live, or I should not have dared to make myself known to my children. But I

wanted their forgiveness—yours, Florence, especially."

"Surely I have nothing to forgive," she said; and at the same moment she took a glass of wine from an attendant's hand and held it to her mother's lips.

"Thanks; it gives me a little strength. Do not send for any one. I have but a few words to say to you."

The servant retired at a gesture from his mistress.

"Nothing to forgive!" repeated the hollow voice.

"Everything, my poor girl. You have found a father and a home; but the shadow of my sin rests upon it. Society will make you suffer for my offences."

"Let it do so, mother; I do not care."

"And you forgive me?"

"If you ever did me wrong, it is more than atoned for by your own suffering, dearest mother!" exclaimed Florence, putting her arms around her.

"Bless you! Oh, bless you! Now promise me to love and protect your sister. She may need your help yet."

Florence drew Clarice close to her side, embracing her fervently.

"She cannot bear what you can, my child. She is the wife of a proud man, who might spare her if he knew who was her mother."

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed Clarice.

"I have made her promise secrecy as to my relationship to her, and she and you must not let the world know you are of kindred blood."

The younger woman would both have protested against this concealment, but the mother held up her hand to deprecate opposition.

They spent hours in conversation and reminiscences, and then Clarice took their mother away.

"I shall come to see you, mamma," said Florence, "very soon."

The carriage bore the invalid to her humble home, a lodging not far from the water. Having seen that she was provided with every necessary comfort, Clarice insisted on sending her a physician, and with some difficulty obtained her consent.

She drove to the house of Dr. Baird, one of the most eminent doctors in the city, and engaged him to attend to Mrs. Kent, as her mother preferred to call herself.

"I shall come this afternoon for your report concerning your patient," said Mrs. Halstead, as they parted.

Within an hour after their departure from Atherton's the colonel returned. He listened with eager attention while his daughter told him all that had passed, and then went out to call upon Mrs. Halstead; for he longed to see again the lovely child who had called him "papa" with her lisping infant tongue, and whom he had loved as his own. He had not a thought of concealing her relationship to him.

Atherton undertook to see after his invalid wife, and to send an escort with her should she insist on following her child to Virginia.

Their conversation took place in the library. At the end of the room a door opened into the music-room, a large, long apartment hung with paintings, with a polished oaken floor inlaid with coloured blocks in imitation of Italian mosaic. The glazed doors of this opened on a conservatory filled with rich exotic blooms and tropical plants. In the centre a silvery fountain flung up its spray that fell into a marble basin full of gold-fish. Variegated aquatic leaves floated on its surface.

Looking down into this basin stood Mrs. Singleton, wrapped in dark musings. She had seen through the open door of the library the gentleman visitor, and was at no loss to recognize him. He had never come before to the house. What did it mean?

She had little trouble in solving the mystery.

The strange likeness between Madame Brentano and Mrs. Halstead had put suspicions into her head, which now received full confirmation.

The visitor of the preceding night must have been the mother of Clarice; they had gone to see the sister, who was Colonel Atherton's newly acknowledged daughter. The colonel might, or might not, be the father of both. In any case, here was a new scandal, ready to break out and involve the Halstead name, bringing disgrace through it upon the young girl whom her son loved, and to whom she was plotting to marry him!

Mrs. Singleton was sincere in her prejudices. She was proud, as all aristocratic Virginians were, of the purity of blood in her race; and she knew Halstead to be so in a painfully morbid degree. To him it would bring shame and anguish like death to know his wife the daughter—perhaps base-born—of a woman who had early lost her good name, and had wandered for years alone and unknown, separated from her husband.

She had heard the story of Atherton's ill-starred marriage and his wife's flight from her home after conduct that set all the neighbourhood talking about

her. She had heard that there were two little girls, only one of whom had been recognized by the father. The repudiated child had been taken by the woman of evil repute and brought up by her in obscurity, to throw her baleful spell in after years over the scion of an ancient and honourable family and take the proud position of his wife. Now she had discovered her kindred, and the discreditable association threatened destruction to the peace and honour of the family.

On reflection the dame decided to say nothing at present. They were going to Halstead Grove in a few days; and the outbreak of scandal might be escaped. The event expected ere long to take place would keep Mr. Halstead at home for a time. Therefore, she would say nothing; but she would be on the watch. If this cloud of shame threatened to break over them among their haughty neighbours and friends, then it would be time for her to withdraw her son from such disreputable connection.

She saw the gentleman depart and Mrs. Halstead go up to her room; but made no comment. Myra did not fail to notice, however, as they sat at lunch, that her aunt's lips were closely compressed as if shutting in a fatal secret which her furtive eyes were longing to betray.

CHAPTER XXV.

FLORIDA ATHERTON sat alone in the large drawing room after her father had left her. Her cheeks were rose-hued, and her eyes sparkled yet, from the excitement of the visit she had just received. Her heart beat joyously, yet with a thrill of something like fear. Had she not a burden in her own life to drag her down whenever her lightened spirit would fain soar into a serene sunshine!

She did not hear the door open, and a stealthy step enter, nor the noiseless footfalls over the velvet carpet. It was only when she rose to go to the piano as a solace for painful thought that her eyes fell upon the figure of a man who stood leaning against a marble pedestal in the corner, on which stood a finely sculptured statue of Silence.

Florence uttered a scream of alarm, and turned to leave the room. But Martin Blake prevented her by going between her and the door.

"Don't be so terribly frightened," he said, sneeringly. "Don't stand shivering and looking as if you were going to faint, but sit down."

He pushed an easy-chair towards her. She looked towards the bell.

"You must listen to me. I have been trying to get this opportunity for a long while."

"How did you get in?" asked Florence.

"Very easily. I have an old friend in this house."

"A friend of yours?"

"Yes, of mine. The new housekeeper."

"It is not true."

"Did you not recognize her? She knew you, my pretty lady, the moment she clasped eyes on you."

"I never saw her before."

"Yes, you did. Throw your memory back to the day when you came to my lodgings, and insisted on going up to poor Gore's room."

"When Gore was dying?"

"Yes, that very time. This woman kept the house where we both lodged—Gore and I. She opened the door for you and answered your questions."

Florence shuddered as she remembered that dreadful scene.

"Why did the woman come here?" she asked, at length.

"Her husband was dead, and she advertised for a situation. She is an excellent housekeeper, and, as I said, she is a friend of mine."

"She shall not stay."

"You would not be so cruel as to turn her away? She had nothing to do—"

"With the murder. But she knew of it."

"She knew nothing."

"How dared she admit you if, as you say, she had recognized me?"

The dark eyes were flashing, for the girl's self-possession had returned.

"She could not help it, my dear. Don't blame her. You know looks are small obstacles to me. I was determined to see you."

"What can you want? I shall give you no more money."

"I do not ask you for money."

"What else do you expect to get?"

The man gazed steadfastly upon her. At last he replied:

"I want yourself, Florence!"

"You have no right to annoy me by coming here."

"No right to visit my own wife?"

"No; you have forfeited all claim upon me. You owned that when I saw you last."

"Florence, the most foolish act I ever performed was when I let you go. I never dreamed you would grow to be so beautiful. I never thought you had so much in you. When I saw you again all my love came back tenfold. As I said before, I will not give you up. You shall be my wife again."

He made a step toward her, but she recoiled with a gesture of loathing.

"You stand in peril, sir," she cried, "when you come near me, or dare to talk in that way. Remember the proofs I hold. Remember I could send you to prison, to the scaffold, by producing them."

"I remember your threats, and defy them."

"Defy them?"

"I cannot live without you, Florence. I love you madly. I will risk death by the hangman rather than give you up. But I know you will not betray me."

"I solemnly declare that I will put those proofs in my father's hands, unless you go away this instant, Martin Blake, and promise never to molest me again. You know how much misery my father will be inclined to show you."

"I don't think he will harm me. Think of the disgrace that will be brought upon you."

"Villain!"

"I cannot deny that I am a villain. I herd with low gamblers and rascals of all sorts. But you can reform me, Florence."

"I should be dragged down to your level. I could not elevate you. Will you go away?"

"Not till you promise to receive me."

"That I will never do."

"I am not afraid of your handing me over to the police. The thought of losing you, Florence, is worse than death to me."

"What money do you want?" cried his wife, drawing out her purse. "I have more in my room. You shall have it all, this once, if you will go and never see me again!"

"I would not promise that for all the wealth in this city. I prize you more than money. You are my wife, and I have a right to insist on your living with me."

"You have no such right. You cast me off, and you have become so steeped in crime that you are out of the pale of decent society. You would make me as vile as yourself. Heaven has given me a home and a protector, and I am out of your reach."

"We shall see," muttered the intruder.

"I expect my father home every minute. You had better not tempt him to have you thrust out by violence."

"He had better not try any such tricks with me."

Florence grew pale at the idea of an encounter between her father and this man. But she was resolved to be rid of him.

"If you will not leave this place, I will retire to my own room. You cannot follow me there."

She had gained the door when Blake strode after her and seized her arm, but not with violence.

"Florence, do not make me desperate. There was a time when you were full of pity for the meanest object that you might see in distress. Why are you so hard towards me? I deserve your pity, if ever a crushed and miserable fellow did."

"I do pity you!" she said, a softness gathering in her eyes.

"Then save me; save me from myself. You alone can do it."

"You are mistaken," she answered, "I could not save you! I should only perish miserably myself."

"I love you, Florence. I love you with a passion I never felt before, and I did not know I could feel."

"It is not true love; it is a passion that would destroy its object when sated. You are incapable of real love, Martin Blake!"

"How dare you say so?"

"Because I know you thoroughly. You are too selfish; you seek only the gratification of your own desires at whatever sacrifice. Your life has shown your real character."

"What do you mean?"

"The evil you have wrought has not been the result of circumstances, but the acting out of what was in your evil heart. I would never trust you again."

"How can you be so hard and merciless?"

"I am only just to myself and to you. We could never be united in heart; to be so in outward seeming would be a false and unnatural position for you, and an intolerable martyrdom for me."

"Do you hate me so bitterly, Florence?"

"I do not hate you; I have never hated you. I pray for your restoration to manhood and virtue. But I could never love you."

"Is nothing due to your husband?"

"Not when he has forfeited my allegiance and duty."

"Florence!" cried the man, fixing his threatening



[HER LIFE'S BANE.]

upon her face, "beware how you drive me to despair."

"I hear the carriage wheels!" exclaimed his wife, turning towards the window. "My father is here!"

As Martin Blake also turned she made a rush past him, threw the door open, and ran through it into the hall and up the wide staircase.

Fale and trembling she gained her own room, flung herself on the bed and gave way to a violent paroxysm of weeping.

Martin Blake did not stay to meet the man he had so bitterly wronged in early life, and whom he sought to rob of his daughter. He watched him turn into the library, and then hastily descended the stairs. He could not leave the house, however, without passing the open door of the library, and as he did so, hurriedly, and with trepidation, Colonel Atherton heard him. He came out, speaking to him, as he laid his hand upon the lock of the great front door.

"Mr. Miles Seaton!" he exclaimed. "What does this mean—your presence in my house?"

Blake pulled the door open as he answered: "I am about leaving it, sir."

"In good time, or you would stand a chance to be kicked out! What has brought you here?"

"I don't know that it is any business of yours, Colonel Atherton."

"Not my business to know who enters my house?"

"Not your business to interfere between married people. I came to see my wife."

"If you mean my daughter, she shall never see you with my consent."

"Without it then!" muttered the ruffian, drawing the door further open.

"Begone, fellow, and never enter this house again! If you dare, your life may be the forfeit!"

As he came toward Blake the villain passed out, and, leaving the door open, ran down the marble steps, stopping a moment to hurl back a gesture of defiance. White to the lips, his burly frame shook with rage and terror. But it was no time to give way to passion. The colonel's stalwart, majestic form showed his possession of superior strength, and three or four able-bodied servants were close at hand. He flung back a torrent of bitter oaths, menacing vengeance, and hurried down the avenue to the gate.

After a few moments' reflection the colonel sent up a message to his daughter, requesting her presence in the library.

She came looking as if some stunning blow had fallen upon her. The strength that had sustained her during the forced interview with Martin Blake

had given way; her agitation and deathly pallor told a sad story.

Her father opened his arms and pressed her fondly to his heart; then he placed her in a large leather arm-chair, and took another near her.

She continued to weep.

"My daughter, you must try to be calm. I have something serious to say."

"Oh, my dear, kind father, I have brought trouble upon you!" sobbed she.

"If you will yield yourself to my guidance, Florence, I will save you. I cannot do it otherwise."

"You mean, father—"

"I mean that the law must release you from this unworthy bondage. I told you so at first."

"You told me you could get me a divorce," said Florence, lifting up her face and wiping away the tears that still flowed. "But I cannot consent."

"You prefer to remain bound to the darkest villain who ever walked the earth?"

"Oh, no; I would gladly be free—you know that, dear father."

"Then why not trust me, my child?"

"It is the terrible publicity I dread—the exposure of horrors through which I have dragged myself in years past. I tremble to think of them. To have them paraded before the world would kill me."

"I have dreaded the same ordeal, or I should never have submitted to let matters go on. But now you have an advantage—"

"You mean the proofs? Oh, father, I could not use those against him."

"What proofs?"

Florence had never told her father of the evidences she held. She saw she had gone too far.

"I could not, ill-treated as I have been, consign him to the scaffold."

"You must tell me all, Florence. You know more of this man's crimes than you have yet told me."

"It is for that I shrink from him with such horror. Oh, father, do not ask me to speak plainly."

"You must; but I will promise to make no use of what you tell me without your consent."

"And that I will never give. You will not ask me for the proofs?"

"I promise you that I will not."

Then the suffering daughter, with trembling agitation, recounted the incidents of that fearful day, the last she had spent in her husband's company.

"And you have these papers yet, Florence?"

"I have, but not to use them against him. I threatened to do so, but it was only to protect myself, when I had no one to defend me against him. I never meant to use them."

"I will not ask you to do so, my daughter."

"Shall I destroy the papers? Some accident might bring them to light."

"Do not destroy them. They may be needed for self-protection; at least he must know that he is in your power. When you are safe for ever from him you can be generous enough to send them to him."

Florence's eyes sparkled.

"I shall be safe," she said, "when the ocean separates us."

"No, he may cross the seas in pursuit of you. In regaining you he recovers fortune and all the good that wealth can bring; he knows that. You must be entirely out of his power before we leave this country."

"By a divorce?"

Her father assented.

"But a divorce cannot be obtained—"

"I have had him placed under observation. Enough has been discovered to secure all we desire, without any disclosure of the past."

"Of his conduct here?"

"Enough. You must not be harassed. All I want is your signature, under oath, to this paper."

He opened a drawer in the long writing-table, and drew out a document, which he unfolded and spread out.

Florence saw the date was very recent.

"You will go with me to give your affidavit this morning," said her father. "I have already engaged counsel, for I had determined on this step."

"It can do him no harm," observed the injured wife, in a low tone, as she glanced over the writing.

"It will set him free as well as yourself. How strange that you should think of him only in the matter."

"I am glad that he will not be harmed. There need be no public exposure, you said when we spoke before of it, in such a case as this!"

"Not unless he offers opposition, which he can hardly do to a charge so fully proven."

"Then I will sign it, father."

"Go and dress yourself to go out. I will wait for you here."

They went and returned in two hours.

Then Florence retired to her room for rest in her exhaustion, and for communion with the Power that had guided her footsteps through perils such as youthful womanhood has seldom to encounter, and to whom she looked with reverent adoration for future guidance.

(To be continued.)



[MARK LANGTON'S WARNING.]

SILVERSTONE'S HEIR; OR, THE MYSTERY OF BLACKROCK TOWER.

CHAPTER XI.

Thy numbers, jealousy, to naught were fixed,
Sad proof of thy distressful state;
Of differing themes the veering song was mixed,
And now it courted love, now raving called on hate.

Collins.

LAURENCE HARLAND resumed his seat, in obedience to Mark Langton's request, and the latter proceeded slowly to fill his pipe. Having accomplished this he lit it, and commenced puffing away for some moments in a most thoughtful silence. At length, holding the pipe between the forefinger and thumb of his left hand, he said:

"Friend Harland, you'll remember, of course, me speaking to you the other night of the disappearance of the young squire, and what I thought."

The fisherman nodded impatiently.

"Well, maybe I was wrong, and maybe not. But, any way, there's more than Mark Langton, it seems, thinking the same thing."

And as the last words fell from the jewel-vendor's lips the absent, abstracted look disappeared from the face of his host, and gave place to one of trouble and anxiety.

"How do you know that?" he exclaimed, almost fiercely. "Have you been gossiping about what you thought you knew among your customers? I thought better of your discretion than that, Mark Langton!"

And the old fisherman's voice was full of reproach.

"Not so fast—not so fast, friend Laurence," cried Mark Langton, "or you'll make a body believe I wasn't so very far wrong after all. Have patience, and I'll tell you all about it."

"Take your own way then," replied the other, more calmly. "What have you been hearing?"

"Well, you must know that my customers are not all fisher-folks," said Mark, puffing slowly at his pipe. "and that some are belonging to what is called the better class. Though, I daresay, I do as much with the people of Silverstone, taking it all the year round, as I do with anybody else."

"What has that to do with it?" interrupted Laurence Harland, impatiently.

"Wait and you shall hear," replied the jewel-vendor. "Be kind enough to permit me to tell my story

in my own way. I suppose you know a gentleman called Ronald Hamilton?"

"Ronald Hamilton!" exclaimed Harland, with a start. "Does he then suspect—"

"Suspect what?" interrupted Mark Langton, quietly.

"The cause of Master Stanhope's disappearance," stammered the fisherman.

"Now, wait a bit, friend Harland," said old Mark. "and don't be in too much of a hurry. Well, you see, I met him, and he spoke in rather a curious way about Doctor Philander. Says I to myself, 'Can he suspect anything?' He seemed to read my thoughts, and answered, 'You, Mark Langton, it strikes me, know more of this affair than you like to tell.' Of course, I acknowledged that I had my suspicions. 'I thought as much,' he replied. Then I asked him had he been to Blackrock. This capped the climax. He looked at me a moment as if he didn't understand my question, and, passing a laughing remark about the old doctor's power and all that sort of thing, he walked quietly into the house, and was the last I saw of him."

Laurence breathed a little more freely.

"Was that all?" said the fisherman, at last.

"No; not exactly."

"What more then?"

"Well, you see, friend Laurence, I then took my way to the old Hall. I heard that the squire was dying, and all through that rascally mystery. This decided me to do all that I could to throw some light on the matter. I didn't forget your advice though for all that."

"You did well," interrupted Laurence Harland, sighing relievedly.

"Perhaps not so well as you may imagine," replied Mark Langton, curtly. "When I reached the old hall I made it my business to ask for Miss St. Clair."

"And told her all, of course?"

There was a spirit of extreme vexation in the fisherman's words.

"Wait a bit; don't be in too much of a hurry," said Mark Langton. "Well, I inquired for Miss St. Clair, and of course the young lady came down to me, as you might suppose. It was a splendid room that they showed me into, and I was just admiring the pictures when in she walked. The poor creature was very pale, and it touched me to the heart to see her. This is all through that unfortunate mystery, I said to myself. But it'll not be much longer a mystery if I can help it. So I told her all."

"You must have been mad!" cried Laurence Harland, excitedly.

"Not much fear of that. I was as much in my senses as I am now. The piece of notepaper I thought was just the very thing to give a clue to the disappearance of Stanhope Bainbridge. And I thought it my duty as an honest man to make it known."

"Meddling busybody!" muttered the fisherman, striding up and down the room. "And, of course, you brought my name into it?" he added, fiercely.

"I did nothing of the kind," replied Mark Langton, angrily. "Your name was never mentioned."

Laurence Harland grew calmer.

"Do you think she'll act on the information you gave her?" he asked.

"I have no doubt but there will be a visit paid to Blackrock in regard to it," was the answer.

"I am glad, however, you have told me this, Mark," the fisherman said; "but, should it cause mischief, you will blame yourself far more bitterly than you could ever have supposed I would blame you."

"What do you mean, Mr. Harland? Explain yourself," said Mark.

"The explanation will come soon enough," replied the fisherman. "I thank you for the motive that induced you to tell me what you have done to-night. Let us light the lamp now, have some supper, and try to forget all about it."

Mark Langton, during the course of the evening, would fain have sounded Harland farther; but, seeing that it was useless, he ultimately gave up the attempt.

Next morning when he awoke he found that the fisherman was up and out. Could he have commanded a view of the road to Blackrock he would have seen Harland treading swiftly with his face towards it.

"Well, I cannot exactly understand all this," said Mark Langton, after calling several times in vain for the fisherman. "I wonder where on earth friend Laurence has gone? I'll just take a turn on the beach, and see if I can find him," saying which, Mark Langton put on his hat and passed from the cottage.

It was still early morning; an easterly wind blew up from the bay, and every little while the sun was obscured in heavy rugged masses of cloud, that drifted up from the horizon.

"It looks to me like the setting-in of a storm," said old Mark, casting anxious and uneasy glances across the bay. "It won't be much use for the fishermen to go out such a day as this; and as for my going to Blackrock, with ten chances as one of getting drenched, that is entirely out of the

question. Confound these storms! I never saw such a summer season in Silverstone in all my life." At that moment he heard a heavy step behind him, and, turning round, saw John Harland coming up at a quick, swinging pace.

"Just the very man I want," thought Mark Langton; "most likely he'll be able to tell me where his father is. Good morning, John Harland."

"Good morning, sir," said John, cheerily. "You're up more than usually early, are you not?"

"The fact is I came out to look for your father." "What! is he not in the cottage?"

"Not to my knowledge. I called him loud enough, but he didn't answer, so I thought I might as well just drop down to the boat, and see if he was there. But what a breeze is blowing, John! I declare it's enough to freeze one to the marrow."

John Harland laughed, and Mark began to rub his half-frozen hands vigorously together.

"Old blood, old blood, Mr. Langton," said John. "You know you are not now so young a man as you were twenty years ago."

"Well, what of that?" said Mark, impatiently. "There is one thing I do know, John Harland, I am young enough yet to undergo more hardship than many young men I know."

"I hope you don't class me as one of the young men," said John, laughing heartily.

"Well, and what matter if I did?" replied Mark, curiously; then he added, "You are going down to the boat, are you not?"

"I am. But I'm half afraid you will not find my father there," said John. "However, here comes Harry, and if he is he'll soon tell us."

Mark Langton glanced in the direction of the small fishing craft which lay at anchor in the bay, and saw Harry Harland coming up from the water's edge. They stood still, and he came towards them.

His face was wan and pinched, and there was something indescribably wild in the unnatural lustre of his eye.

"Good Heaven!" muttered John, "what a change."

Old Mark, too, was struck by it. But he remembered the strangeness of his acting the day before, and ascribed it in his own mind to the conduct of Marian Delarme.

"Are you ill?" asked Harry Harland's brother, anxiously.

"Ill!" exclaimed the other, bitterly. "Ill! Certainly not; no more than you are, John. What made you ask that question?"

"Oh," stammered John, "you looked as if you were, that was all, Harry. Forgive me—"

"What have I to forgive?" asked the young man, in a hard, harsh tone. "You are mistaken if you think I am ill. I was never better in my life."

To Mark's inquiry Harry replied that his father had not been to the boat that morning.

"Humph!" muttered Mark Langton, musingly. "He has not been to the boat, hasn't he? Then I imagine he must have gone to Blackrock. What if he should tell Doctor Philander what he knows? It wouldn't do much good, that's certain. I hope, however, he'll have the good sense to keep it to himself."

"Were you looking for my father, Mr. Langton?" said Harry, abstractedly.

"I was indeed, and thought he might have been in the boat."

"He is not in the cottage?"

"No, I should say not, for I bawled myself hoarse in calling him."

"If he's not in the house he must be off in some other direction. I have not even seen him on the beach this morning. Perhaps he's gone to the Hall."

"Perhaps he has," said Mark—and in his own mind, added "I am rather of the opinion, however, that he's gone to Blackrock."

John Harland, after another anxious look at his brother, walked slowly down the beach in the direction of his boat.

Mark mused for a minute or two before he spoke again. Then, approaching the young man, he took his hand kindly within his own and said:

"You are ill, Harry; it is no use denying it. Poor John has gone away feeling quite bad, thinking that you have slighted him."

"Can he feel worse than I do myself?" cried the young man, impetuously. "Can he feel half as miserable, Mark Langton? Heaven knows if he does I pity him indeed."

Harry Harland released his hand from the grasp of Mark, and, covering his face, gave vent to several violent sobs.

Mark's heart was touched.

"Come, do not give way like that, Harry," he said, almost huskily. "I hate to see a strong man like you touched so deeply with grief. Look up, Harry, lad, and tell me what's wrong with you."

"It's nothing—nothing, Mark," faltered young Harland; "nothing that you would care to hear,

and, alas! nothing that I should care to tell you. I wish I was away from Silverstone, Mark, that's all." The tones were very bitter and trembled with emotion.

"Oh, nonsense!" cried Mark. "Don't talk like that. Cheer up, lad; there's nothing wrong but will come right again some day."

"Never, Mark, never. My heart is blighted. I shall never know a peaceful minute again till I am far away from Silverstone."

"There is something wrong with you, Harry. Can't you tell me—your old friend? Who knows but I may be of some service to you?"

"What's the use?" said his companion. "What's the use, Mark, in opening an old wound?"

"It is as I thought," answered Mark; "it is Marian Delarme's work. Poor lad! he has been cruelly afflicted by her. I wonder what the women in these parts are made of. They must surely have hearts of granite. Come, Harry," he said, aloud, "be a man. As for talking of not knowing another happy moment in Silverstone, that's all foolishness."

The young fisherman burst out in a wild, unnatural laugh.

"You may think it all foolishness," he cried. "But in another week I shall be far away from the place that has caused me so much misery."

Mark was staggered at the grim determination of his words, and for a moment scarcely knew what to say.

"It is only the heat of sudden passion," he muttered. "A day or two and his self-respect will enable him to forget her."

Mark Langton little knew the power of love when he could reason thus; he little knew the powerful passion which burned with a perpetual fire within Harry Harland's heart, or he might have thought otherwise. Could a lover ever have loved like him and loved so vainly?

"Yes, Mark, I am going to leave Silverstone," said the young man, in a more composed tone.

"Leave Silverstone!" ejaculated the jewel-vendor, looking up. "Why should you leave Silverstone?"

"Because it's hateful to me. That is why, Mark. I am sure if I stay here another month I shall go mad or drown myself or do something worse."

"I think he must be mad already," thought Mark. "Talking of leaving the place where he's been born and brought up! I wonder now what he would do in a strange place, he that's never been ten miles in all his life from Silverstone?"

It never struck Mark that he himself had left home at an early age, in fact when he was a mere boy, long before he had reached the years of manhood.

But Mark perhaps never thought that any one else would have the hardihood of encountering the fierce buffets of the world as he had done. No, no, this never for a moment entered his mind. What he had done through sheer necessity hundreds had done before him and hundreds would do again when he had long passed away.

"Sheer madness—sheer madness," muttered old Langton. "But he'll come to his senses. He will think better of it."

"Now you are joking," he said, looking up. "You don't really mean leaving Silverstone, Harry?"

"I have told you once for all that I do," replied Harry, bluffly.

Mark looked more and more amazed.

"Do you know what you are going to do, young man?" he said, gravely.

"I don't care, Mark. I have made up my mind. That's enough."

His voice was resolute.

Mark approached and laid his hand gently on his shoulder.

"Look here, Harry, I am an old man," he said. "I have seen sixty long years in the world and have been knocked about from post to pillar ever since I was a boy. My father and mother both died when I was little better than an infant, so I know what it is to be used to hard words and hard knocks too. But you contemplate going out into the world as a man, and yet you know little more of it than a child. Excuse an old man's bluntness, Harry. I am merely speaking for your good. Now tell me where do you intend to go when you leave Silverstone?"

The question was asked so suddenly that the young fisherman hesitated to reply. Perhaps it had not struck him as yet to what part of the great universe he would wend his steps after leaving his native village.

"You pause," said Mark. "I am glad to see you pause, Harry; for the step you meditate is by no means a wise one. There are sundry dangers in the way which would even appall you, stout-hearted man as you are."

The words seemed to annoy the young man.

"If I paused it was not because I was afraid, Mark Langton," he replied, with some show of bitterness

in his tone. "Thank you all the same for your advice; but I am old enough now, I think, to take care of myself. Good day, Mr. Langton."

"Stop, Harry, stop, for mercy's sake! You are not going away in anger from the old man, are you?"

"No," said the fisherman, turning back and extending his hand frankly. "Your words were given in the very best spirit and I thank you for them. However, if you still wish to act my friend mention not a word of what has passed."

"And that I promise," said Mark, grasping his hand with a thrill of emotion. "I hope, however, you may find the world as you expect it, my poor lad."

"If I don't it won't much matter," returned Harry, with a faint smile. "So good-bye, once for all, Mark. You may not see me again, at least for some time."

They were a very abortive attempt at cheerfulness were these last words, and Mark could see it.

"I mustn't let him go away like this," thought the honest-hearted Mark. "No, no, poor lad, I must find out where he is going. Who knows but what I may give him a word or two of advice that will be of benefit to him? Now, Harry, lad," he said, aloud, "tell me at least where you intend going when you leave Silverstone?"

"To London," said Harry, half-abstractedly.

"To London! Good gracious! what can you do in London?" said Mark, in astonishment.

"What many another man has done before me—anything I can get."

"Still you have no trade but your fishing," said the old man.

"What does that matter? Are there not people in London without a trade as well as I? I am sure I'll not be the only one that will have to buffet with the world there. There is enough room for all, I should imagine. And surely something will turn up to keep a man from starving; don't you think so, old friend? You see, I am very cheerful and sanguine of my future."

"Yes," thought Mark, sighing; "it is the kind of cheerfulness that accompanies black despair. The tones don't deceive me a bit, London," he mused.

"London is a great place to be sure—noisy and bustling, with alternate turns of misery and happiness, but oftentimes more misery than happiness—where there are wealth and poverty in abundance, luxurious living and starvation; and far more of the latter as far as my experience leads than anything else. Anywhere but London. What can he do in London, a young fisherman, without a particle of experience? No, no, lad; anywhere but London."

"Well, what are you thinking of, Mark?" interposed Harry, who could not help contrasting the strange phases of emotion that crossed and recrossed the old man's face. "Your thoughts do not seem to be very pleasant," he added, laughing huskily.

"No, they are not, Harry—far from it. I was just thinking of what you said about going to London."

"Ah, ha! and that has made you feel uneasy, Mark?"

"In truth it has. I like you too well, my lad, to let you rush headlong to destruction."

And the tones of his voice were far too genuine to doubt their sincerity.

"Rush headlong to destruction! What do you mean, Mr. Langton?"

"I mean just this, Harry," said Mark, approaching him and laying his hand warningly on his shoulder, "if you be foolish enough to go to London you will rue it but once."

"And that once will be?" said Harry, with some impatience.

"All your life," was the answer, delivered solemnly and impressively.

"So be it then," was the reckless reply. "Let it come to that! I won't be the man to complain, I assure you. If I stay here in Silverstone I shall only be doing some harm to myself or to somebody else, so it is better to be away; and going away I am."

"He can't be moved," Mark Langton thought, sadly. "And, what's more, I can't prevent him if he's determined on going. It is the way of the world; young blood is always headstrong—always for doing things out of reason. But now that it's at its worst we must take as hopeful a view of it as we can. Harry, one more word with you before you go. Have you much money?"

The question was a singular one for Mark, and the young fisherman looked at him with astonishment.

The jewel-vendor thereupon hastened to explain.

"Harry," he said, "don't be surprised at my question. You'll want money, you know. It is a hard world to get along in without it—a very hard world, Harry; more particularly the great world of

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London where you haven't a solitary friend to go to. That was one reason I asked you whether you had money. It is a necessary evil, boy, but we can do nothing without it."

"I know that well," said the young fisherman, gloomily. "I wish I had plenty of it, that's all, and I might be happier. At least," he added to himself, "I might not love in vain."

Poor, foolish youth! did he imagine, then, that Marian Delarme would entertain any other than a sister's affection for him, though he were the possessor of millions? Marian's nature was too high-minded to measure her affections by a man's wealth. He knew it, too, and condemned himself for the impetuosity of his thoughts.

"No, no," he said, within himself. "I did her wrong. She doesn't love me, and she never can love me. Were I covered with diamonds, it would be all the same to Marian Delarme. Dear girl! I wish I could die for her!"

This generous outburst was in accordance with the honesty of the young man's nature. So great was his love for Marian that he would indeed have laid down his life for her, had she demanded it. And yet this great and noble feeling that was capable of sacrificing every prospect on earth was to perish unrequited—to perish without a hope.

How bitter was the pang to think that she loved another!

He could never experience the faintest gleam of happiness again in Silverstone, and he bravely resolved at all hazards to leave it—perhaps for ever. His heart might break under the strain of this stern resolve, but he cared little now for the prolongation of a life which had been to him so painful—so exquisitely miserable.

"I wish you had plenty of money, my lad," said Mark, interrupting his thoughts. "And then your wooing of the beautiful Marian might not have gone unrewarded."

An imperative and almost fierce gesture from the young man made him pause. He knew that he was treading on delicate ground, and refrained from again mentioning Marian's name during the interview.

"What a pity that men will be such idiots," thought old Mark, half-angrily. "Here's Harland thinking as fondly of the girl that has jilted him as if she had given him her very heart's blood. But such is human nature," added Mark, "and very unusual human nature it is."

"You haven't told me whether you have any money yet," Mark Langton reminded him, gently. "I should like to know, Harry, for your own sake, though I am aware you can't have much, for you are not over and above saving."

"Oh, never mind, thank you, old fellow," cried the young man, with an overflow of unnatural mirth. "I have quite enough for the journey. I contemplate, depend upon it."

"And starve afterwards," thought Mark; "that will be nice, won't it? Enough for your journey, indeed," said the good old man, shaking his head ruefully. "And, pray, how much do you think will be the cost of your trip to London?"

"A couple of sovereigns," replied Harry, carelessly.

"A couple of sovereigns!" repeated Mark, in astonishment. "What good is such a sum as that to you?"

"It will be enough for me," was the half-abstent reply. "I am not a very expensive liver, Mr. Langton."

"And indeed you shouldn't be with that sum," said Mark, bluntly. "But is that all you have, Harry?"

"Oh, never mind, Mark. It will do you no good to know."

The young man's words were at variance with Mark's common-sense view of matters. There was an utter recklessness in his voice which caused the old man more than one twinge of uneasiness.

"But I really insist on knowing, Harry," he said, at length. "You are going out into the world, my lad—a world that will measure you not by your own good worth but by the gold you have in your pocket."

Harry Harland laughed bitterly.

"Don't laugh in that way, Harry," said the old man, reprovingly. "It is no laughing matter, bitter or otherwise, I assure you. When you go to London you enter a city where you have never been before; and when you get there you will find that your purse is your best and only friend—providing always it is not empty. Gold, gold, is what you want, young man, and without that you had better remain in Silverstone."

"I see your drift, Mark," the fisherman replied, "and I appreciate with all my heart the kindness of your intentions. But, my good old friend, it is not to be. All your words will not change me one iota

in my determination. To London I mean going and to London I shall go."

"Without money?"

"Not exactly; for have I not told you I have a little?"

"Two or three sovereigns to pay your expenses, and starve in the streets when you get there," said Mark, sarcastically.

"No, I won't starve, Mark—you are wrong, I won't starve."

"What will you do then—steal?" said the old man.

The hot blood mounted to Harry Harland's forehead in an instant. That bitter word had touched him to the quick.

"Nor steal either, Mark Langton," he replied, indignantly. "You offend me by using the word, though I know you meant it with a good intention. If the worst should come to the worst, Mark, there will be one place still open."

"Where?" asked Mark, mechanically.

"The army," the young man replied, with bitterness. "I can enlist, Mark, as many a better man than I has done before me. It is only a matter of taking the shilling, then I can have a living for a good number of years without any fear either of stealing or starving."

The words were spoken in the extremity of a crushed and hopeless despair. They were not words that came up in a moment, to be forgotten the next, and the old man could see it by the compressed lips and flashing eyes of the young man who confronted him.

"He means it every word," thought Mark. "All the obstacles I can encounter his path with will have no effect upon him. Besides, he has bound me down by a promise to tell no one. Of course that ends my breaking the news in a quarter that might at least exert some restraining influence over him, or, at any rate, deter him for a while from this mad piece of folly which he is about to undertake. I can scarcely see my way clear," said the old man, thoughtfully. "But this unfortunate fellow can't go to London empty-handed, that's certain. He must have money. But will he accept any of me if I offer it to him?"

"Look here, lad," said Mark, aloud. "You are bent then on going to London?"

"I am, Mark; I have told you that repeatedly," was the reply, in an impatient tone.

"I know that, Harry, lad. But will nothing on earth keep you from taking this mad journey—for I can call it by no other name?" said the old man, sadly.

"Nothing, Mark—nothing in the wide world," replied Harry, solemnly. "I have fully made up my mind to go, and that's enough."

"There is no mistaking the tone," mused Mark. "nothing can move him a bit. So I had better give him the money, and have done with it. Ay, ay, that will be the better way. Without money in London means simply starvation."

The old man fumbled in his pocket and brought out his pocket-book.

"See here, Harry, lad," he said, laying his hand on the other's shoulder, and looking preternaturally solemn as he spoke. "You can't go to London without money; you may make up your mind to that. Now it so happens that I have a little by me, which I was intending to bank the moment I left Silverstone, so, my lad, I don't see that it could be in safer or worthier hands than yours. Ahem! there's about fifteen pounds there in all, and just enough perhaps with what you have yourself to set you into some decent employment when you get there. But look out for sharpers, Harry; there are plenty of sharpers in London. Always keep the too familiar parties at a distance, and you'll be safe."

The young fisherman had listened to all this with wondering ears; the tears started into his eyes as Mark spoke of the fifteen pounds, but when he mentioned the sharpers a smile flitted through his tears.

"Oh, good old fellow!" he cried, rushing up to the old man in an outburst of enthusiasm and taking his hand. "Oh, Mark Langton, I never knew your heart properly until to-day. Heaven bless you, Mark! but don't ask me to accept your money; I cannot do it. It would always be haunting me, Mark, if I took it."

"Why?" said the old man, interrupting him, and deliberately opening his pocket-book.

"Because, Mark, I don't know that I could ever return it to you again."

"Nonsense! I know you can and will," said Mark. "Very well, Mark, if you say so I'll take it. Heaven bless you again, dear, kind old friend."

"Oh, don't think anything of that, my lad," said the old man through his tears. "I was a poor lad in London once myself, and I can feel very much for any one that's going there. But it's a very foolish journey, I'll not conceal that from you, Harry."

"Not another word, Mark, dear old fellow. Here's John coming. Remember I have your promise. Not another word."

CHAPTER XII.

Search not to find what lies too deeply hid;
Nor to know things whose knowledge is forbid.
Deuham.

LAURENCE HARLAND walked on to Blackrock. The morning was cold and blowy, and he struck out briskly.

"I am glad I started," said the fisherman, thoughtfully. "There will be nothing done to-day at the fishing-grounds, and the doctor might as well know all as not. It will at least put him on his guard, and forewarned is forearmed. What a meddling fellow old Mark Langton is! If he were as good at looking after his own affairs as he is at gossiping about the affairs of others, all this worry and anxiety would have been spared. I declare I didn't sleep five minutes last night, conning the whole thing over, and planning in my own mind what was best to be done. And what was the result? I am going now to tell the doctor, and quite right too. But poor old Mark is an honest fellow for all that, and no word of mine shall injure his prospects at Blackrock."

This was the soliloquy in which the fisherman indulged as he plodded over the road to Blackrock. But there was a heavy load of anxiety on his mind, and his face bespoke anything but cheerfulness.

How much changed was Laurence Harland since he had allowed his breast to be made the secret repository of Stanhope Bainsbridge's disappearance? No one but himself knew the unhappy moments he had suffered since then. No more was he characterized by that bright smile and elasticity of spirits which made those who came within his influence so happy. He knew it and felt miserable at the thought. Nor were the villagers slow in observing this sudden change, and, if they did not speak of it, they shook their heads at each other most ominously.

In fact Laurence Harland had soon begun to find that he was the observed of all observers.

And he felt this very much indeed, for, after all, he was only a man—a man, too, who courted the goodwill and experienced a kindly interest in the favourable opinion of others. And what generous mind does not?

But the fisherman for all that tried hard to reason himself philosophically out of such a feeling.

"How can I help what they think of me?" he used to say. "If they think ill of me I cannot help that. I never did them any harm, and yet they are beginning to look upon me, I sometimes fancy, with suspicion. It's a bad feeling to imagine that of people. Perhaps I am accusing them wrongfully; if I am I am sorry for it. I little knew before how much public opinion sways a man."

And he was right. The favourable opinion of others often causes us to forget half our ills.

"I wish I could look as pleasant and cheerful as I used to," said the fisherman, sadly. "But while this secret is hanging over me, I'll never know a happy moment. I see people who can forget their miseries, and, if they are weighed down by heavy troubles, face the world with an unruffled countenance. But I am not one of those; I make the worst of things, unluckily."

These were the thoughts that obtruded themselves every day on Laurence Harland's life, and they were sufficient to make him exquisitely miserable.

He had already traversed half the distance of his journey when his ears were suddenly saluted by the faint clattering of horse's hoofs.

The fisherman stood still in the road and listened attentively to the sounds, which every moment were becoming more audible.

"Some one from Blackrock," said Laurence; "and if it's the doctor it will save me the trouble of going there."

The road was winding and hidden by great oak and elm trees, so thick that the approaching horseman was almost on the spot before he could see him.

It was Doctor Philander coming at a sharp canter up the narrow flinted lane—libellously called a road. He drew up when he saw the fisherman, and courteously saluted him.

"Good morning, Mr. Harland," he said, cheerily. "A cold morning and blowy, looks like the setting in of a storm. No fishing to-day, I suppose?"

"No," Harland replied, looking at the nearly obscured sun, over which an army of rugged clouds had been gathering. "It is not likely there will be, Doctor Philander. The season has been very bad so far, though I cannot grumble at the business done. I have seen much worse summers than this since I have been in Silverstone; and even your best summer has been a failure in the way of business."

"As to that I cannot speak," said Philander. "But, considering my short residence here, I must say the weather has been anything but favourable."

But what brings you forth so early, friend Laurence?"

The fisherman smiled uneasily.

"That was indeed the question I was going to put to you," he said.

"Humph! I was going to the Hall," was the answer.

Laurence Harland stepped back amazed. What could thus have induced his friend the doctor to make the journey to Silverstone Hall was quite beyond his comprehension. He had been two years, if not over, a tenant of Blackrock, and had never gone near the place.

The master of Blackrock enjoyed his amazement for a little while, then he said:

"This journey seems to cause you no little surprise, my friend. So it might. But so inscrutable are the ways of man that one should really be surprised at nothing. Yes, friend Harland, I am going over to the Hall partly in a professional capacity as a practised doctor. The good squire is ill. I suppose you are aware of that?"

The tones were anything but kindly, and hid an unlimited amount of covert sarcasm withal.

The fisherman's posture in the road became more uneasy. He stamped his rough-shod boots nervously on the flint stones.

"What will the world come to next?" he thought. "If anyone had told me half an hour ago that the doctor was intending to visit Silverstone Hall I should unhesitatingly have said he spoke falsely. But here he is going to the very last place I expected him to visit. Inscrutable and mysterious are the ways of man—of this man especially. He has some ulterior object in his visit, I am sure."

All this time the master of Blackrock was scanning Laurence Harland's face with his keen black eyes as if he would have penetrated the inmost recesses of his soul—as if he would have read every thought that was passing through his bewildered brain. At last he burst forth in a harsh, resonant laugh.

"You try to discover an explanation for this unaccountable freak, Mr. Harland," he said. "I own to you I can scarcely credit it myself. But so it is, and certain circumstances often force a man to do many things against his inclination."

This unexplainable explanation, if it might be so termed, seemed to mystify Laurence Harland more and more. He searched his brain in vain for a plausible pretext to reconcile the doctor's conduct with his intended visit.

"Is it of no use puzzling my brain any farther," thought the fisherman. "If he was inclined to give me an explanation he would have done so from the outset."

"I think I'll dismount," said the master of Blackrock, after a while; and he did so. "It is cold work riding, Laurence Harland, especially such a morning as this, and as you are going part of the way with me, why, we'll walk in company."

"Very well, sir," was all the fisherman said.

They turned and pursued the road together; the doctor with the bridle-rein on his arm, the fisherman leaning heavily on his stout staff.

For some time they went on in silence. Laurence Harland was thinking deeply and sadly—so deeply that he scarcely looked up from the road over which he was walking.

This silence at last grew so irksome that Doctor Philander said:

"What is wrong with you, friend Harland? You look wan and haggard-looking, and even now some secret trouble seems to weigh you to the earth."

The fisherman looked up with an indescribable sadness in his face.

"Can I look otherwise?" he said, sorrowfully. "No, Dr. Philander. As long as my soul is burdened with the secret you have confided to me I can never know what a moment's happiness is. Fatal hour! that I accepted the trust," the fisherman said, bitterly.

"Oh, Mr. Harland, come, come," said the doctor, "don't, for gracious sake, try to make a mountain out of a molehill. The trouble is not so bad as you imagine. Try then to forget it; and when the proper time comes all will be well. Did I not give you my solemn word of honour that everything should be done straightforwardly and honestly?"

"You did," the fisherman replied, somewhat mollified by his manner.

"Well, look up then, and be cheerful. Be, at least, a man, for your own sake. You are strangely changed, Mr. Harland, within the last few weeks."

"I know it," the fisherman answered, sorrowfully.

"And others know it too," cried the master of Blackrock, with some severity. "I'll warrant you, the clowns of Silverstone are already talking of it!"

"Sir!"

The word came in hot indignation from the fisherman's lips.

"Forgive me, friend Harland; I did not mean to offend you," the doctor hastened to say. "Perhaps I was too hasty. Forgive me for it; will you not?"

"With all my heart, sir," replied old Harland, extending his hand frankly, "but to be plain with you, doctor, I don't care to have my neighbours spoken of as clowns. I am one like them myself; I have been brought up amongst them from my boyhood, and, as far as I know, there is as much intelligence in Silverstone as elsewhere."

The master of Blackrock smiled, with a covert sneer.

Then his face assumed all its wonted placidity, and a kindliness of expression which very rarely deserted him.

"Oh, by-the-bye, Mr. Harland," he resumed, after a while, "I forgot to ask you what was the object of your visit to Blackrock this morning? Any communication for me?"

"Yes," replied the fisherman, slowly, "regarding Stanhope Bainbridge's disappearance."

Dr. Philander's face darkened.

"What about the disappearance?" he asked, quickly, but in a seemingly careless tone.

"This," said the fisherman, laying some stress upon the word, "they seem evidently to harbour a suspicion at the Hall and at Mr. Hamilton's that you were more or less concerned in Stanhope's leaving home."

"Strange man!" said Harland to himself, "I know as little of you now as when you came here. The profoundest grief, the most exquisite misery, seem not to cost you one passing thought."

Was Laurence Harland right? Was this man indeed so exquisitely selfish that he felt for no one's sorrow but his own?

"So they have their suspicions, have they?" said the master of Blackrock, as he bent his body to the strong breeze that swept down the road.

The fisherman hesitated.

"Why do you hesitate, Laurence Harland?" said Doctor Philander, with well-feigned suspicion. "Is it that I am no longer worthy of your confidence?"

There was a good deal of grim mockery in the words.

The fisherman felt it, could see it, but he forgot the almost harsh tone in which they were uttered as he replied:

"No, Doctor Philander, I have not even hinted that you were unworthy of my confidence or that of any other honest man, though your words do sometimes cause me some strange uneasiness. I am like a man who is groping his way in the dark, Doctor Philander. I—"

"Come, come, Laurence," interrupted the master of Blackrock, with a harsh laugh, "the morning is cold; besides, the highway is no place for sermonizing."

The fisherman looked at him with pain in his face. Could this then be the man he had served so devotedly? The mere thought caused him to turn away with a loathing and disgust indescribable.

"I did not expect such words from you, sir," he said, at last, in his most freezing tones.

"Good Heavens, Laurence Harland! what do you mean, man?" cried Doctor Philander, with well-simulated surprise. "You seem awfully touchy this morning. I haven't spoken a word yet but what you have taken some offence or other at it. I really cannot imagine how I have given you such deadly offence."

"You have given me no deadly offence," replied the fisherman, sadly. "But I expected something different from you, Doctor Philander; something I might regard as coming from an honourable man and a gentleman."

"Oh, Laurence Harland!" said the doctor, stopping suddenly in the road and taking the fisherman's hand within his own, while the tears seemed to start into his eyes, "you wrong me; by Heaven you wrong me!"

The fisherman's nature was too generous and open to withstand this. He looked for a moment into the doctor's face, and, observing the tears standing still in his eyes, he pressed his hand convulsively.

"I believe you, doctor," he said, "I do honestly and conscientiously believe you. It was only my own selfish thoughts that dictated suspicions that are as unwise as they are reckless. Forgive me any pain that I may have caused you."

The master of Blackrock smiled at him through his tears.

"You are forgiven, Mr. Harland," he said, in stifled accents. "But don't accuse yourself of selfishness, my good friend, though your suspicions, whatever they may be, are without foundation. I own there is a dark mystery surrounding my life, and that my actions at times may appear incomprehensible.

But, as I before told you, you may expect me to fulfil my promise as an honourable man and a gentleman."

The words were spoken with such genuine feeling and downright honesty that the fisherman had no longer a doubt left on his mind. He blamed himself bitterly for indulging in what he now considered the uncalculated and harsh language he had more than once used during their conversation. But his mind was too full with the enormity of his offence to express his contrition in mere words. A look was enough. The tears had sprung up into his own eyes.

"Oh, Mr. Harland," cried the master of Blackrock, observing these evidences, "it grieves me to the heart to see you affected thus. Oh, my friend, brush away those evidences of emotion and once more wear a cheerful smile on your kindly face. I cannot tell you how miserable I feel to think that one act of mine should cause you the slightest pain."

"I know it, doctor—I know it," the fisherman replied, with a strong effort to appear cheerful. "I must have been very wicked and ungenerous indeed to think otherwise."

"Not another word then," said Doctor Philander, hastily. "Let us once and for ever erase from our minds any differences that may have existed between us. A man cannot always wear a perpetual smile, friend Harland."

"Alas! I can readily understand it," replied the fisherman, thoughtfully, "though some can smile and smile under the most trying difficulties and the bitterness of bitter sorrows."

"Yes, that is indeed true, Mr. Harland," the doctor said, in his most impressive tones. "But let us forget that we have a sorrow to trouble us, my friend. And now, I suppose, we part. Your road lies to the village, and mine to the manor house."

They had approached cross-roads which diverged into an almost acute angle. The fisherman assisted the doctor to mount, and, bidding each other a "good morning," they proceeded on their respective routes, each swayed by feelings that were as much different as the men themselves.

Dr. Philander galloped about a mile and a half along the narrow road over which he was travelling until the two massive towers of Silverstone Hall came in view. Then he drew up, dismounted, and led his horse by the bridle-rein. He was completely immersed in his own reflections, and oftentimes a bitter smile would come into his face and muttered words of the strangest import break upon his lips.

Had any one seen him as he walked along the flinty and uneven road his conduct would have been remarked upon as something peculiar and even extraordinary. Sometimes he paced along with a quick and nervous step, and suddenly, without any apparent cause, he would stop altogether. Again would he slowly resume his walk, as if debating with himself whether he should proceed or return, the expression of his face exhibiting that he was totally unconscious to all around him, and that he was wholly absorbed in his own thoughts—thoughts indeed that bore anything but a cheerful aspect.

That Dr. Philander's present mission was one for which he bore no very great love was quite evident; but as he approached nearer the vicinity of the manor he seemed by a powerful effort to control his emotions; his face resumed its wonted placid look, and he advanced to the old mansion with his usual slow and quiet step.

Ronald Hamilton, who had observed him for some time from one of the quaint old windows of the Hall, came out to meet him.

"So, doctor, you think that walking is better than riding this morning?" he said, with a kindly salute.

"Yes," replied the doctor, evasively, "I felt almost frozen, to tell you the truth, and thought by dismounting and walking by the side of my horse a little I might get up some circulation."

Ronald Hamilton laughed.

"The truth is," he said, "I thought you were hesitating about coming to the Hall. I saw you stop several times on the road. Oh," he added, sadly, "you don't know how much this secret is weighing me down."

The doctor grew alarmed, and his face turned to a deathly pallor.

"Be silent, I implore you," he whispered, huskily.

(To be continued.)

DEATH OF A PENINSULAR VETERAN.—We have to record the death of one of the oldest of those who served during the Peninsular campaigns at the beginning of the present century in the person of Major Thomas Ramsden Agnew, who has just passed away at the ripe age of about 84 years. He was a member of the old Scottish house of Agnew, whose ancestors were for many centuries hereditary sheriffs for the county of Wigtown, and whose family is now represented by Sir Andrew Agnew, Bart., of Lochnaw. He entered the army in 1807 as lieutenant in the 82nd Regiment of Foot, and between the years 1809

and 1812 he served under the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsular campaigns. He was present with his regiment at the capture of Oporto, and also at the battle of Talavera. He was also present at the defeat of Marshal Soult in Portugal in 1809, and in the skirmishes at Toro and Zancara, and at the passages of the Esla and the Ebro and other minor engagements. At the battle of Vittoria his leg was so severely wounded by a cannon shot as to require three separate amputations of the thigh. He received the war medal and two clasps for his services in the field, and from 1819 to 1864 he held the command of a powder magazine. He retired from the service on full pay in 1864.

EXPECTATIONS.

CHAPTER I.

Farewell, earth! my race is run;
All thy pleasures I must leave.
Morning's crimson-rising sun
Will not see one eye to grieve. *Uhländ.*

CHARLES VERNON was a young man not yet thirty years of age, not unhandsome after a certain type, and with an air of dash and gallantry which made him a favourite with ladies. His face was full and round, sallow of complexion, and ornamented with long, black side whiskers, his teeth were white and glittering and extremely pointed in shape, his eyes were bold, black and hard, a strong unscrupulous soul lurking in their glittering depths. He was of aristocratic lineage and connexions. He had been well educated, had lost his parents at an early age, had given himself up to a career of dissipation, had exhausted a handsome patrimony in riotous living, and now beheld himself face to face with an absolute poverty, too proud to work, even if he had known how, with the tastes of a Sybarite and the indolence of a Turk.

After a lengthened deliberation, he said aloud, with a strange quietness:

"It's all up with me. I see no way out of my trouble. My country house is mortgaged to the last timber. The money-lenders are done with me. I've had a good time of it during the last ten years, have spent money like a prince, have seen every phase of life, and have enjoyed existence to the full. And now what remains but to create an item in the newspaper?"

He went to his trunk and brought forth a small leathern case, which, on being opened, was found to contain a pair of silver-mounted pistols. They were loaded.

He took up one and examined it, looking down into the tiny black tube with a strange gaze, as though it were a telescope and through it he beheld the vastness of eternity.

"One touch," he said to himself, calmly, "and I shall be done with the need of money for ever. This is my only resource. And yet how I shrink from death!"

He shuddered, his sallow face growing very pale. He was still looking into the little dusky tube, his eyes dilating, when a knock sounded upon his door. He had barely time to thrust the weapon back into the case when his valet entered his presence.

This servant, Thomas Gannard, had been in Mr. Vernon's employ for several years, and knew much more concerning his private affairs than Vernon would have deemed possible. He was under-sized both in stature and bulk, sleek, smooth, and noiseless, with a pair of snaky eyes set under a low, retreating forehead, and with a close-shaven face and a disagreeable mouth, which habitually wore a very disagreeable smile.

A single, swift, furtive glance at his master's face, at the pistol-case on the table, and at the empty purse, sufficed to give Gannard a keen comprehension of Vernon's desperate frame of mind and terrible purpose.

The disagreeable smile on the valet's oily face deepened as he glided forward, the morning newspaper unfolded in his hand, and paused only a few paces distant from his employer.

"Is the case so bad as that, sir?" he asked, significantly.

Vernon started, but the whiteness of his face did not change as he made answer, very quietly:

"I've run through my money at last, Gannard. I shan't be able to pay your last quarter's wages, but you can have my watch if you like. I do not need you at present. Leave me."

"But I have something to say to you, sir," said the valet. "I have foreseen this. I expected it sooner. I could have prophesied it years ago. During the past year you have travelled towards ruin at a furious pace. A drag, with a four-in-hand, hunters in the country, hangers on everywhere, the habits of a prince, all these cost. Only last week you flung a thirty shilling bouquet at an actress on the stage; and here you are to-day! Another man would have foreseen the end, would

have preserved a remnant of his fortune and gone into obscurity to live upon it, but you keep up all your state and have a valet to wait upon you till the last."

Mr. Vernon had listened to this address in amazement. He now found voice and exclaimed, haughtily, pointing to the door:

"I am not so poor as to submit to your insolence. Go!"

"I am not insolent, although I have spoken so plainly, sir," said Gannard. "I am like a physician, who probes the wound before he seeks to heal it. You stand upon the verge of ruin. You are about to destroy your life because all else you value is gone from you. You are a gentleman, but a ruined one; I am only a valet, but a prosperous one, with a thousand pounds in the bank. Perhaps even my advice and counsel might be worth listening to. Perhaps I might show you a way out of your difficulties. Perhaps I might show you how to gain a fortune tenfold greater than the one you have squandered."

Gannard's tone was quiet and respectful, and Mr. Vernon resisted the impulse to again order him from the room.

The hands of the ruined gentleman played idly with the pistol case. He was still determined to end his miserable, dissolute life by his own hand, but he was willing to defer the act a few minutes longer.

"I don't care for any of your suggestions, Gannard," he remarked. "I have no means to study for a profession, even were I not too old, and if I were inclined to do so. I might become a chevalier d'industrie, but that would be a precarious life, and I fancy that I should not make a success in it. I should never make a fortune at gaming, I always lose, you know. No, there's no chance for me!"

"There are expectations, sir."

"Expectations? Expectations of what? From whom?" exclaimed Mr. Vernon, in surprise.

"From your cousin, the rich baronet, Sir Michael Trebasil," said the valet. "He has forty thousand a year clear income, and his estates are the finest in Cornwall."

"And you dared to think that I would become a pensioner on Sir Mark Trebasil's bounty?"

"I referred to your prospect of succeeding to his vast property."

Vernon's lips curled.

"Fine prospects," he sneered. "Sir Mark Trebasil is about my own age, strong and vigorous, with a constitution unimpaired by any excesses. He is good for fifty years yet. If he should die, however, there stands between his property and any possibility of my inheriting it four persons nearer akin to him than I, and these four persons are all under the middle age."

"Very true," said the valet; "but Sir Mark is not married and has no direct heir. He is now travelling on the Continent, and I have heard that there is no prospect of his marrying. Strong men die every day by accident or by fever, in a hundred ways; why should he be an exception to such a liability? As to the four persons who stand between you and the succession of Sir Mark's estates, will you tell me their names?"

There was that in the manner of his valet that impressed Vernon. He condescended to comply with the servant's request.

"Why," said he, "in default of a direct heir to Sir Mark, the present baronet will be succeeded by his young cousin, a little lad of six years, named Owen Trebasil. Next after young Owen, in the line of succession, comes John Trebasil, also Sir Mark's cousin, a young fellow of two-and-twenty, unmarried, but engaged to marry. There are two lives to begin with, that would far outlast mine, if mine were allowed to run its natural length."

"Yet," said Gannard, unfolding his newspaper, "just listen to this. I was glancing over the morning paper which you bade me take away unopened, when I came upon news that will astonish you. What have you to say to this:

"Died, on Sunday last, after a brief but severe illness, at Digby Hall, Liskeard, Cornwall, Owen Trebasil, only son of the late Owen Trebasil, Esq., aged six years."

"Dead! Why the child was the picture of health. So John Trebasil is next heir."

Gannard farther unfolded the paper, turning to a fresh page. Without preliminary remark he read the following paragraph:

"Terrible Accident.—On the 15th instant, while following the hounds at the county hunt, John Trebasil, Esq., was flung from his horse while in the act of leaping a hedge, and his head striking violently against a stone, he sustained a fracture of the skull beyond human power to remedy. He was removed to his home, where he died next day."

"This is credited to a Hertfordshire newspaper." A flash kindled in Vernon's pale face, and his bold eyes glittered with a strange brilliancy.

"What a singular fatality!" he exclaimed. "Two gone out of the four who stood between me and the

succession to a princely heritage! The old adage that it never rains but it pours seems to be verified. Why, there are but two left—two persons only between me and the present baronet!"

"But two," assented Gannard. "And who are they?"

"First in order, is Harold Park, some five-and-twenty years old, who is starving somewhere in the neighbourhood of London, with his wife, upon the more pittance which he earns as an artist. His father squandered a fortune in foolish speculations, and he paints poor pictures and cherishes dreams of becoming a great artist some day. He is a good-hearted, impulsive, honest young fellow, convivial in his tastes, and easily led. He has a vast respect for me. He has no children."

"And the other rival?"

"Is a Miss Lyle—Miss Charlot Lyle. The estates, in default of a male heir, descend to the female line. The title, of course, descends only in the direct male line," replied Vernon, becoming more communicative as he more fully comprehended his brightening prospects. "All these whom I have mentioned—Sir Mark Trebasil, young Owen and John, Park, Miss Lyle and I, had one common grandfather, who was Sir Owen Trebasil. He had three sons and three daughters. Sir Mark, the present baronet, was the only son of his oldest son. John Trebasil was the son of his second son, young Owen, who has just died, was the son of his youngest son, who was also his youngest child."

"The three daughters married. The eldest married John Park, and Harold Park is their only son. The second daughter made a runaway match with her music-master, a fellow named Lyle. Sir Owen, her father, was proud as Lucifer, and disowned her, and would never see her again while he lived. She died young, her husband died also, and of their family of children only the youngest, Miss Charlot Lyle survived them. I have heard my mother speak of that child, but I do not know where she lives. Sir Owen's youngest daughter married Francis Vernon, Esq., of Lancashire, and I am their only child. I am cousin, therefore, to Sir Mark and to Park and Miss Lyle. Last night—an hour ago even, I should have deemed my prospect of succeeding to Sir Mark's estates not worth a farthing. Now—"

"Now," said the valet, "only this Park and Miss Lyle stand between you and the succession. Your path is clear to a grand success. Don't you see, sir? Remove these two obstacles between you and the succession to the Trebasil estates, and you will come next to Sir Mark. If he should die unmarried, you would be one of the richest commoners in England."

The master steadily regarded the man. By this time all trace of haughtiness had disappeared from the manner of the former, and the two were on confidential terms.

"Would you suggest that I commit murder?" said Vernon, slowly, his voice sinking to a whisper.

"No, indeed. How strangely you mistake me! Murder! They hang men for murder. But there are ways of removing people from one's path without murdering them either by knife or pistol," said the valet. "This Harold Park, your cousin, is convivial in his tastes. He has known you all his life, and looks upon you with a kind of admiration. How easy for you to lead him on, to foster his weakness, until he drops into a drunkard's grave. No blame could possibly attach to you, if you manage the affair properly, while he will be as effectually destroyed as though you had employed the knife."

Vernon's eyes glowed with wicked fires.

"I see," he said. "Gannard; you have the head of a prime minister. I could manage it. Park likes me and trusts me. I could send him into the jim-jams in a month's time. But the girl—how could I remove her?"

"Find her out, study her situation, and some plan will suggest itself. The daughter of a music master, she is probably poor. Deepen her poverty, heap scandal upon her, and drive her to despair and suicide. If she has a lover, destroy his faith in her. If you should chance to be pleased with her, marry her yourself, and combine your interests with hers."

"What a temptation! What a chance for me to grasp fortune and position at one bold effort!" breathed Vernon, drawing his breath hard. "Gannard, you have awakened the sleeping fiend in my nature. I could destroy Park through his own weakness. I could destroy or marry Miss Lyle. How the path opens before me! Rid of these two intervening lives—but if Sir Mark should marry? If other heirs should come into being? Or if I had to wait half a century before I could come into my inheritance—till my hair grew gray and all my capacity for enjoyment should be gone—what then?"

"Why should you wait?" asked the valet, a red gleam shining in his eyes. "Has Sir Mark no weakness of which you could take advantage to work his removal? Has he no dangerous habits?"

Does he hunt? Hunting accidents are common. Witness John Trebasil's death. Is he a daring rider? The gift of a spirited but treacherous horse may work the end you seek. Does he yacht? A leak in his craft may make you master of Waldegrave Castle. A hundred ideas will suggest themselves to you. In one year from to-day, instead of a despairing man, bent upon suicide, you may be owner of all the Trebasil estates—if you will, and no stain of crime need be upon your hands."

Vernon trembled with a great and terrible agitation.

"I should need money to carry out my plans—when can I get that?" he asked.

"I will lend it to you. I have a thousand pounds, with which I had intended to open a business somewhere. I can do better by lending it to you. You will need a friend, an ally, some one to advise you and to co-operate with you. I will be that friend and ally."

"And what will you demand for your services?"

"Only half of one year's income from your estates—twenty thousand pounds," said the valet, calmly.

"So much?"

"It will be but a trifle to you, and without me you can achieve nothing. I am no ordinary servant. I was the younger son of a tradesman, and received a common-school education, and with it I imbibed certain ambitious ideas which I have never been able to carry out. With twenty thousand pounds I could buy an estate in some remote county and set up as a country gentleman. I could marry the daughter of some respectable, well-born country squire and found a family for myself, which should rank with those of the gentry. Such is my ambition. Considering the value to you of my services, I sell them cheap. Of course I should require the money lent to you with interest, in addition to the sum mentioned."

"Help me to become master and owner of Waldegrave Castle within three years' time, Gannard," said Vernon, "and I will give you all that you demand."

"Will you sign a paper to that effect?"

"Yes, and now!"

Gannard brought writing materials, and Vernon wrote from the valet's dictation a cautiously-worded note-of-hand, promising to pay to Thomas Gannard, upon demand, the sum of twenty thousand pounds.

"If I have nothing to pay with the note will be worthless," said Vernon. "No money can possibly come to me from any other source than this one in question, so I have nothing to fear. I will redeem that note when I become owner in Sir Mark's stead."

"Now the note for one thousand pounds, with interest."

Vernon wrote the note as desired.

The valet folded the papers, putting both in his pocket-book.

"I will draw out my bank account in notes this very day," he said, "and deposit them to your credit, sir, in your old banking-house. The bargain is made. I will take my share of the trouble—risk there is none."

He withdrew from his pocket several gold pieces placed them in the yawning purse of Mr. Vernon, clasped it, and restored it to its proprietor.

The weight and clinking of the coins appeared to act upon Vernon with the rapidity of magic. He tossed up the purse, thrust it in his pocket, carried his pistol case to his trunk, and then exclaimed:

"There's no turning back now. I have entered upon the path that leads to fortune. I must get to work at once. I will not lose one day. I need a diabolical skill and patience, a fiendish ingenuity and adroitness, but those qualities I already have in abundance. Park now stands in the relation of heir-apparent to Sir Mark—I must dispose of Park first of all, before turning my attention to Miss Lyle or to the baronet. I will go out to Park this very day. Poor, weak-souled, generous fool, I shall make short work of him! Ah, that's his step in the hall now; I ought to know it."

The steps approached Vernon's door and halted. A knock upon the panel resounded through the room.

Vernon arose, his eyes glittering evilly.

"It is Park's knock," he whispered. "Let him in, Gannard. Satan himself is helping us! I'll begin my work immediately!"

CHAPTER II.

Pains of love be sweeter far
Than all other pleasures are. Dryden.

The little village of Stromberg stands upon a ledge half-way up the mountain side, in one of the wildest parts of the Tyrol. A more lonely and picturesque little town than this, perched so airily between the dark and gloomy valley filled with pines and the snow-crowned summit can scarcely be conceived. A stream of water runs brawling through the principal street of the village and hastens to

lose itself in the valley below. The steep roofs of the quaint houses are burdened with stones; the ample kitchen gardens are enclosed by stone walls; there is a wide green, where the men, old and young, play games on Sundays and holidays; there are odd little shops, where every variety of merchandise is sold; on Sundays and on market-days there are open-air booths where cheap trinkets are displayed, and, finally, there is a little stone church, surmounted by a painted cross, where the inhabitants, a simple, honest people, worship all together, knowing no variance of religious opinion.

Stromberg is only thirty miles from Innsbruck, yet, being aside from the main routes of travel, few strangers find their way to it, and it has, in consequence, preserved a simplicity that is almost Arcadian.

The men and women wear the costumes their ancestors wore, and adhere to the customs that prevailed a century ago. Nearly all the inhabitants are workers in wood, and the toys and carvings of Stromberg have an excellent reputation throughout Austria.

The most pretentious house in Stromberg is situated higher up the mountain upon a shelf or plateau two or three acres in extent, and overlooks the village. This house, like the rest, has a steep roof laden with stones, like the rest, it has wide verandas, completely encircling both first and second storeys, with airy outside staircases connecting them; but it is larger than any of the others and possesses an air of comfort and refinement to which the others are for the most part strangers. A wide green lawn stretches in front of it, and there is a flower garden at the side. Both lawn and flower garden have a look that unmistakably English.

In this house lived for several years an English gentleman named Julian Stair. He was a younger son of a proud old English family, and was one of that vast crowd of impetuous Britons who wander over Europe in quest of third-rate towns and villages where existence can be maintained at the smallest expense compatible with an appearance of respectability.

He had declined to enter the army or navy, or study a profession, but had early contracted what his friends termed a highly imprudent marriage, his bride being a well-born but penniless girl. He had inherited a sum of money sufficient to insure him an income of two hundred pounds a year, and on this small sum the young pair managed to live in England until after the birth of their only child. Then, finding themselves unable to visit on equal terms their aristocratic connexions, finding that the meagreness of their income entailed a host of distasteful economies in the effort to "keep up appearances," they wandered to the Continent, spending a couple of years in Bruges and several years at Munich.

It was at Munich that Mrs. Stair died, and it was there, a year or two later, that Mr. Stair, in the hope of securing a home and a mother's care, guidance and companionship for his daughter, then entering her teens, married again.

In the course of a pedestrian tour, shortly after his second marriage, through the Tyrol he had come upon Stromberg. The gloomy grandeur of its scenery, the simplicity of the people, the excellence of its climate, and, more than all, the discovery that his income would maintain his family there in almost princely fashion, determined him to settle there.

Accordingly, he had leased the dwelling we have described for a term of years, and had made himself a home among these simple Tyrolean peasants, finding society in his books, which he loved with enthusiasm, and an occasional trip to Munich.

The first Mrs. Stair had been a beautiful, highly educated, spirited, gentle lady, who had sympathized with her husband's bookworm propensities, and had been to him an angel of love and peace. The second Mrs. Stair was an Englishwoman also, but a shrew, with a wicked temper and a cold heart, a woman whose mission seemed to be to render her husband's life a burden, and to embitter the existence of his child.

A few years of bickering and turmoil succeeded this unfortunate second marriage, and then Mr. Stair, wearied and disheartened, lapsed into a state of mental weakness, which endured for several months, at the end of which period death came to his release.

It was a year subsequent to his death, one late afternoon in September, and a day or two previous to the events narrated in the preceding chapter, that a young girl stood upon the upper verandah of the Stair dwelling, one arm thrown carelessly around a carved pillar, her eyes fixed in an eager gaze upon the path leading up from the village.

This girl was Joliette Stair.

She was a bright little beauty, nineteen years of age, slender and graceful as a willow, with a clear, pale, olive complexion, small, well-cut features, which were yet slightly irregular, and with a mass of jet-black hair which waved and wrinkled away

from her low broad brows. Her face was sweet, piquant and spirited, full of expression, nobleness and soul, and was illuminated by her glorious eyes, which were large, of liquid jet, full of dense, black shadows and great drops of light—eyes of haunting fire and sweetness.

She was dressed in a shabby, worn-out suit of black, which was frayed at the seams and patched upon the elbows; and the little boots with which she was beating an impatient tattoo upon the verandah floor were agape across the toes. Yet the instinct of girlhood had impelled her to make the most of her personal appearance, and the little head was crowned with fashionable dishevelment, her collar was very dainty, and a bunch of roses drooped on her bosom.

Her brows contracted a little with a growing impatience as she continued to gaze down upon the village, and she murmured, inaudibly:

"Why don't he start for the trying-place? Can he be there already? I will go and see."

Before she could move, however, her stepmother's shrill, shrewish voice called out from the nearest room:

"Joliette! Joliette!"

The girl obeyed the summons, with a sigh, entering a large room with picturesque windows, the ordinary sitting-room of the family.

The floor was laid in hard wood forming a diamond-shaped pattern. Rugs were thrown here and there upon its polished surface. The furniture was somewhat cumbersome but very comfortable. There were couches, tables, easy-chairs, a porcelain stove and a piano, besides pictures and an array of old china fastened upon the walls to serve purposes of ornament.

Mrs. Stair was reclining in an easy chair, a peevish, discontented expression on her sharp features. She was an angular woman both as regarded temper and physical contour. Her hair was flaxen in hue and banded so tightly to her head and over her ears that it had the appearance of being glued fast. Her light eyes were full of discontent and querulousness.

She, too, was dressed in mourning garb, but her dress was of fine bombazine, and she wore a profusion of jet ornaments, including a long chain of links of jet which she was pulling between her fingers.

"Oh, there you are!" she exclaimed, as the girl appeared. "You are always idling, Joliette. Another girl would be at work, but you spend half your time in wandering in the wood, or down in the village."

"Is there anything for me to do?" asked Joliette. "I don't know that there is," was the peevish answer. "Did you trim my bonnet, and have you finished sewing the jet on my new black silk gown?"

"I finished both an hour ago, and put them in your dressing-room."

"Very well," said Mrs. Stair, a little more graciously. "You've made the dress very handsomely, Joliette, and I am going to give you my old black silk to make over for yourself. It requires considerable darning, it is true, but a simple attire is best suited to a young girl. It will really be fine for you!"

"Nevertheless, I decline it with thanks," said Miss Joliette, coolly. "I prefer a new alpenny print to a secondhand silk gown, especially when the latter is in the last stages of dilapidation."

"You are very independent, miss. I only hope that I may live to see that pride of yours dragged in the dust. Pray, how do you intend to support your high-flown notions? It is time that we understood each other. I have summoned you here to inquire if you have made any plans for the future, and, if so, what you propose to do."

Mrs. Stair applied a vinaigrette to her nostrils and languidly contemplated her stepdaughter while awaiting the latter's response.

Miss Joliette's pale olive complexion suddenly flushed, although she answered, composedly:

"Why has it become so suddenly necessary to consider my future? Has anything happened? Is our income imperilled?"

"Our income?" repeated Mrs. Stair. "What interest have you in the money left by your father? I have deferred explaining matters to you, knowing your quick, passionate temper, but I can defer the truth no longer. My poor husband spent a vast sum of money upon your education, considering his means. You have had the best German masters during the greater part of your life; and, against my wishes, he sent you to a German school at Munich during the three years preceding his death. You have been loaded with useless accomplishments; you can sing, draw, embroider, play the piano, and converse in three or four languages; and I verily believe that your father fixed our residence in this spot in order that he might have the more money to expend upon your education. Be that as it may, he made a fine lady of you. You have had your share of his property. During the

last year of his life, he made a will, leaving all his money to me and to my son, your half-brother, rightly considering that you should earn your own living. You are, therefore, and have been during the past year, a dependent upon my bounty. I have submitted to this tax, not willing to act hastily, and hoping that something might occur for your benefit. I am compelled, however, to act now. In fact, I have to-day sold the lease of this house to the rich toy-maker, Ambau, and he will take possession within a fortnight. I shall proceed with my son to England at once, and take up my residence with my friends. And now what are you going to do?"

"I cannot decide upon the spur of the moment. I must have a little time for consideration."

"There is little time to spare," said the step-mother, somewhat grimly. "There are not so many paths open to you that you need long hesitate. You might become a governess."

"I am not of stuff of which governesses are made, fear," said Miss Joliette, smiling. "The truth is, should like to see a little something of life, of the world."

"On nothing a year? Perhaps you think of marriage? Mr. Adrian Rossiter has been at Stromberg a month, and haunts you like your shadow. Sir Mark Trebasil has been at Stromberg all the summer, and I am sure you can marry him any day you choose. Both are Englishmen, both are rich, both are well born. Adrian Rossiter is handsome, only three-and-twenty years of age, and is best suited to you in every respect. You know him thoroughly, for he lived in Munich with his mother during her childhood. Sir Mark Trebasil owns coal and tin mines, great estates and is a baronet, but he is thirty years old, and stern, jealous and passionate. I am sure that in spite of your poverty you could marry either of these men. Has Rossiter ever asked you to marry him?"

"No, he is not in love with me," said the girl, quietly. "He is a godson of Mrs. Faulkner, who is also my godmother. I know him well; as you say, we have been like brother and sister nearly all our lives; he is a distant relative of my own, and his regard for me is that of a brother, while mine for him is that of a sister. Neither he nor I ever thought of a closer connexion between us."

"Then there's this Cornish baronet. Shall I ask him his intentions?"

Joliette's face reddened like fire.

"No, no, indeed!" she exclaimed. "Do not be troubled about me. I will promise not to remain a charge upon you much longer. Perhaps this evening I may be able to tell you what I intend to do. I am going out now."

And without waiting for remonstrance or farther parley, Miss Joliette went swiftly out upon the verandah, caught up her gipsy hat, hurried down the outside staircase and walked rapidly across the lawn.

"He must be waiting for me," she murmured. "I am late for our tryst."

A few minutes' walk brought her into the shade of the pine wood clothing the mountain side. She had taken but a few steps along a narrow path when she suddenly encountered a young gentleman, who was proceeding in the direction whence she had come.

Both stopped short and Joliette held out her hand.

"Where are you going so fast, Adrian?" asked the girl.

"I was on my way to your home, especially to see you," said the young gentleman. "May I walk with you a little? I have something important to say to you."

Joliette hesitated, sending an uneasy glance forward into the spicy depths of the wood.

"If it is especially important, I can give you a few minutes, Adrian," she said, with a little hesitation, which Mr. Rossiter did not observe.

He was a slender, handsome young fellow, with a bright frank face, a pair of honest brown eyes and a mass of curling brown hair. He was a man to be trusted; unsuspicious, warm-hearted and true as steel. Joliette liked him with a warm, sisterly affection; her love was bestowed elsewhere.

"You shall judge of the importance of what I have to say, Joliette," said he. "I have received a letter to-day from England, from our relative and godmother, Mrs. Faulkner. She intended to write to you by the next post, and you will receive a letter from her to-morrow, by private hand. You have fancied perhaps that, like Sir Mark Trebasil, I have been staying on at Stromberg merely for pleasure. In truth I had business here. Are you aware that your father left his property away from you entirely? that you are penniless?"

"I have just learned the fact from my step-mother."

"Mrs. Faulkner learned the truth some weeks since. She is a very eccentric old lady and while she sympathized with your friendless condition, she

would not make any overtures of friendship to you without first ascertaining something of your character. I told her all about you, of the fact that we were playfellows once, and that few brothers and sisters love each other more dearly than we do; but she argued that you might have changed in the last two years and bade me come and see you and study your character and report to her promptly and impartially. I came and found you the same bright witch I have always loved, and I reported as ordered. The result is that she is about to offer you a home at Blair Abbey. For farther particulars see the letter to you which will arrive to-morrow."

"She is very kind," said Joliette, "but I do not know that I can avail myself of her kindness."

"Surely you have no foolish notions about independence!" cried Mr. Rossiter. "You are not clamorous for work are you? Here is Mrs. Faulkner—your godmother, you know—old, eccentric, lonely, and needing a gay young companion to cheer her last days. She lives in state at Blair Abbey, is attended by troops of servants, but her life is a mockery. Widowed, childless, suspicious of every one who approaches her, vindictive, hard-tempered, querulous, she is still noble and has a heart under all her hardness. I am sure you would find your way to that heart. She has been very good to me, and I love her. I am sure that you, being a girl, could not only win her love, but make her desolate life happier. Won't you try it?"

"I must have time to think."

"I will not hurry you. Decide after receiving her letter. I have spent several years at Blair Abbey, and I call it still my home. I'd like to have you there Joliette. What pleasure we would have! Surely you can't base in love with your stepmother that you'd like to hang to her skirts?"

"No! besides, she has told me that she cannot support me longer. I can't tell you now anything about my plans. In truth, I haven't formed any yet. In a day or two, Adrian."

"I see," said Adrian, smiling. "I understand Joliette. Of course I know that Sir Mark Trebasil has not spent a summer at Stromberg without purpose. Pardon me, Joliette, for my importuness. I am your brother, you know. I shall be sorry if I am not to have you at Blair Abbey after all. Mrs. Faulkner will be disappointed."

Joliette reddened anew desperately.

"Don't, Adrian!" she said. "I may go to the Abbey; I cannot tell. And now, what was there in this communication that would not keep until morning?"

"Nothing, only I shall leave at daybreak for Munich. I am to meet there Mrs. Faulkner's confidential maid, who is the bearer of your grandmother's letter, and who is commissioned to escort you to England if you will go. I will not detain you longer, Joliette. Bid me God-speed, as you used always to do, little cousin."

He put his arms around her and kissed her upturned face. Joliette, without a blush, in all frankness and sisterly love, returned his salute. Before she could be released there was a crash among the bushes beside them, and a man, fair of face, but with stern mouth and furious, blazing eyes, leaped out upon them, uttering a cry of rage that was like the utterance of a wild beast.

Rossiter released the girl and sprang backward.

"Sir Mark Trebasil!" he ejaculated.

Joliette flew towards the new-comer.

"Mark!" she cried, "Mark!"

"Back!" thundered the Cornish baronet. "Not a step nearer, traitress! lest I strike you dead at my feet!"

(To be continued.)

IN SPITE OF FATE

ROSE HILL had never been lovelier. It was the month—June—when the place should have been at its fairest, and when, in truth, it was doing its best to illustrate its name. The house was white—or rather of stucco of so pale a gray that it might easily have been called white—with a lofty colonnade in front, overlooking a lawn which sloped off into terraces, extending to the river's banks. These half-dozen terraces were fairly a-bloom with roses.

Helen Chilton, armed with an immense pair of shears, had filled the great basket on her arm with roses, and was going on cutting, cutting, cutting, and still seemed to have made no impression upon the profusion of flowers. These roses were the pride of Helen's heart. They had chiefly been planted in her father's time, under her instructions, and now that her brother Chauncey was master here, they still continued to be called Helen's roses. I think it might be safely said that these were the only worldly possessions upon which Helen set store. She sings softly to herself while she cuts her roses. She looks very womanly and gentle in her "virginal white vesture," on that sweet summer evening, with an air about her as though she belonged to some purer atmosphere than the ordinary work-a-day world.

She shades her eyes presently to look into the sunlight which deluges the river, up which a boat is advancing. Her brother has been in the city all day, and had said that he would return on the boat. Yes, that was the River Queen, Chauncey's boat. She hurried back to the house, to arrange her flowers in vases and dishes, in the large, square, airy drawing-rooms; and she had barely made ready this mute but eloquent welcome when a cheery voice without called, "Helen, where are you? Good evening, mother dear!" and Chauncey had come.

Then dinner, and after dinner, Chauncey brought out his cigar, and smoked it leisurely on the steps of the piazza, with one adoring woman on one side, another on the other. He was precisely the kind of man to be adored by his womankind.

Handsome, to begin with, of rather a massive and heavy order of beauty, which carried with it an impression of strength and repose. Then Chauncey Chilton never begrudged care or trouble in the service of those he loved; he knew how to be as painstaking as a woman. He was thoroughly domestic; he was never happier than when in his own home.

If he had not had this devoted mother and sister, he would probably have been married long ago. But they had made him so comfortable that he had never felt the selfish need of a wife which induces many men to marry. His slippers had always been waiting for him; his table had always been faultlessly appointed; his tastes had always been consulted in great things as in small; he had always had his every wish forestalled and gratified. Added to this, no violent fancy had ever overtaken him, in consequence of which he had remained unmarried.

As he sat there and enveloped himself gradually in a dense cloud of smoke, he somehow congratulated himself that he had formed no other ties than those which nature had bequeathed to him. He was glad that no one but they three would suffer in the catastrophe which had just overtaken him. A catastrophe which was no less than the loss of his fortune. He had received this ill news that morning, but he had kept it to himself until now. To tell the truth, he had been revolving ever since he came home, how best to break it to his mother and sister. It would be as unexpected to them as it had been to him.

Finally, he broke the ice. He laid a letter in his mother's lap.

"Dear mother," he said, "I wish I had the art to prepare you for the bad news contained in this letter. But after doing my best to hit upon an expedient, I fall back upon the simplest way. No one is dead, no one is ill; but—we are ruined."

Except that Mrs. Chilton turned as white as a ghost, she showed no other sign of emotion as she read the brief business letter which Chauncey had given her. The letter was written by the corresponding secretary of a railroad company which had been advertising itself largely of late. The company had suspended payment.

Mrs. Chilton knew that Chauncey, in opposition to the judgment of many of his friends, had put almost everything that he owned into this company; literally almost everything. Rose Hill remained, of course.

Mrs. Chilton read the letter slowly, for the twilight was gathering rapidly. Then she handed it to Helen, who rose and stood under the swinging Chinese lantern which had just been lighted in the hall, to read it too.

When she came out again, her mother was crying on Chauncey's shoulder.

"I have wondered sometimes why I should be so much better off than so many other people," Helen said. "Now I am to see the reverse of the picture. Well, I shall always love to look back to dear Rose Hill and our happy life here."

"Do you mean to say we must leave Rose Hill?"

Poor Mrs. Chilton, she had lived here from the time she had been brought here a bride.

"Oh, mother, can you ever forgive?" cried Chauncey.

"My darling! This is your misfortune, but not your fault. And it falls as heavily on you as on us." "I have been wondering all day what I shall turn to. I cannot dig, but work I must, in one way or another. I wish I had been trained to it; still there must be something for me to do."

Certainly, if muscle made the workman, he ought to be one. And yet he felt doubtful about it himself. He had the vaguest notion possible as to what he should turn to. Nevertheless, he put an arm around his weeping mother, and with the other drew Helen towards him.

"You shall neither of you want as long as I can take care of you," he said.

After that they discussed ways and means. It would be impossible to live at Rose Hill, if for no other reason than the expense of keeping up such an establishment, longer than would be necessary to pack up and to sell off the furniture. Chauncey believed that there would be no difficulty in disposing of the place—either by sale or by rent.



[AUNT DEBBY HEARS ALL.]

"We will have to board, I suppose," said Mrs. Chilton. "That will be very disagreeable, I am afraid, although I know nothing about it."

In an instant Helen had a vision of a room in a cramped city boarding-house; of living there, year in year out. She had seen such boarding-houses once or twice, to which she looked back as to glimpses of prisons. Could she endure such a dreary, treadmill life?

Not very long afterwards poor Helen settled down to the grim reality of which she had pictured to herself the possibility.

They had left beautiful Rose Hill; Chauncey succeeded in renting it to a person, who afterwards bought it, and on the proceeds first of the rent, afterwards on the interest of the sale, they lived. It was a scanty pittance, so scanty that it seemed a marvel that Chauncey should submit to grind along on it, rather than leave it to his mother and sister, whilst he himself earned his own bread. But Chauncey apparently found it next to an impossibility to find work for his hands to do. He was always on the eve of finding employment, when some difficulty would present itself.

He spent the greater part of every day trying to secure a situation, as he constantly assured them. In reality he lounged away his time pleasantly enough.

Mrs. Chilton and Helen gradually drifted away from their old associations. But Chauncey continued to keep up his visiting acquaintances, pretty much as in the old days when he used to go the city from Rose Hill for a week's visit.

He had always been a popular man in society, and he continued to be affectionately received—I use the adverb advisedly—even after his loss of fortune. He was in constant request at dinner parties to make up an odd number; also, he was in the habit of receiving confidential little billets from young ladies with whom he was on cousinly terms, asking him to escort them to the theatre, or to take a seat in an opera-box, when the party was incomplete.

In a word, it became rather the fashion to use Chauncey Chiltern as a kind of social ballast.

He was considered a perfectly safe man. Perhaps this was not very flattering, but the effect was to sweeten Chauncey's cup of life most materially.

All this playing at intimate cousinship took him away from the house in which he resided, where he might otherwise have had his susceptibilities very severely tried by a perpetual course of haircloth sofas and chairs.

As it was, he went back to that life with renewed amiability after each brief little interlude. If he said very little about the people he visited, or the pleasure he enjoyed, this was because all that seemed so foreign to the life his mother and sister were leading at present.

Then, too, his friends found his residence so far away, and the street where Mr. Chilton lived so entirely out of the world, that all intercourse gradually ceased, except an occasional sighing inquiry of Chauncey as to how his poor mother was, or—his sister; she never went out, did she?

Chauncey gradually forgot to deliver these messages; in fact, Mrs. Chilton gradually resented them; she felt that she had been neglected by some of the very people on whose friendship she had once relied.

Chauncey realised this instinctively, and with his usual tact avoided the theme. It was one of the articles in his creed never to provoke discussion; in this way he got over a good deal of what might otherwise have been very dangerous ground.

One day it came to pass that Helen stumbled over a relative of her own accord. It was a slippery winter's afternoon, and she was making the best of her way home from a walk to the post-office, when, on turning a corner suddenly, an old lady was blown up against her by a sudden gust of wind, then whirled off to a little distance, where she fell on the pavement. Helen ran to her, and succeeded in raising her, but she hung heavily on Helen's arm and wailed out that her ankle was sprained.

Helen advised her to send for a carriage.

The old lady, a wizened, sharp-featured old soul, nervously besought Helen not to leave her, and, in fact, held on to her hand until the carriage came, when she begged the girl to stay with her until she was within her own doors.

During the drive, Helen told her companion her name, when, to her great astonishment, she discovered that they were relations. The old lady was Miss Deborah Skinner, and the aunt of Helen's mother. There had been no intercourse between her and the rest of the family for years, Miss Debby being chiefly remarkable for a talent for quarrelling; and Mrs. Chilton had even lost sight of the place of her aunt's abode. But here had she come to light, within a stone's-throw of her two nieces.

As a matter of course, Helen went home full of the adventure, the first which had rippled their monotonous life for months.

The next day Miss Debby called, her sprained ankle having proved to have been conjured up by her imagination.

It would be an exaggeration to say that she had taken a fancy to Helen, because I doubt whether her ancient heart were capable of an emotion so warm; but there had been something in the firm touch and in the ready support of the young girl which had appealed to her necessities. She was an old woman now, failing fast. She would like to have such a strong young person, upon whom she had a claim of blood beside, with her constantly, to wait upon her, to nurse her when she was ill, to come between her and her servants, of whom she had a constitutional distrust. She had cross-examined Helen during their drive yesterday, and had found out the change in the Chiltons' circumstances; therefore she came to pay this visit, very full of a scheme of taking Helen to live with her, without remuneration, to be sure, but for the sake of a home.

However, to this proposition Helen would not listen for a moment, and Mrs. Chilton, who knew Aunt Debby of old, was equally emphatic in declining the offer. That Helen should become the companion and nurse of a crabbed old woman, without any compensation whatever, was unheard of.

"Helen could do far better any day by answering any one of twenty newspaper advertisements," Mrs. Chilton candidly informed her aunt. "Helen will never leave me unless by doing so, she can decidedly better her condition."

When Aunt Debby was gone, Mrs. Chilton commented bitterly upon her overreaching disposition.

"She spends possibly four hundred pounds out of an income of six thousand," she said. "And to think of her having wanted to make you her slave for nothing! The only inducement would have been the hope of inheriting her fortune one of those days." Helen shuddered.

"It would have been like spending one's life in a graveyard."

Even the hated third-storey back-room she and her mother lived in now grew less repulsive, in view of that other life, humouring the caprices of a rich old woman, and secretly wishing all the while for her death.

Time passed. Miss Debby did not give up her project, and returned to the attack with a new programme. This time she proposed that both mother and daughter should come and live with her. She lived in an old-fashioned, gloomy house, in a quiet street which belonged to her. She would retain three rooms for her own use, and leave the use of the rest of the house to the Chiltons. She made quite a merit of asking no house-rent.

"I am an old woman," she said, "and sometimes I feel as though I would like to see the faces about me of some of my own kin. And I can afford to give you the house room."

Mrs. Chilton's lip could not resist a scornful curve.

"Afford!" she thought to herself; "there is no doubt of that."

But she insisted to her aunt that she must leave the matter open until she could talk it over with Chauncey.

This was the first time that Chauncey had crossed the field of Miss Debby's thoughts.

"Of course Chauncey's home is where mine is," his mother said, decidedly.

And to this Miss Skinner agreed without demur.

Chauncey proved to be a zealous advocate of the new programme. In fact, his heart warmed instantly to the rich old aunt who might one day leave him above want.

"It's a capital idea, mother," he asserted, "a capital idea. Really a special Providence. I couldn't bear to think of your going on with the kind of grovelling life you are leading now, and yet there has seemed to be no help for it. I haven't hit upon my special niche yet. At Aunt Debby's it will be like being at home for you and Helen. Heaven!

what a comfort for a fellow to come home and be able to go into dressing-gown and slippers once more after dinner."

For the life of him, Chauncey could not help being selfish; he could not help seeing all these family arrangements as they especially concerned him.

And that very evening he persuaded his sister to go with him to see the old lady, as he immediately christened her.

Helen consented rather reluctantly. Aunt Debby had not succeeded in inspiring her with a desire to be much with her.

They were ushered by a grim-visaged servant-woman into a barren drawing-room, lighted only by the gas-light in the hall, which was turned down to its lowest.

Presently Miss Skinner came in, wrapped in a black shawl, and with worsted mittens over her cold fingers.

Chauncey Chilton seldom failed to thaw any woman, and Miss Debby even proved no exception to this rule. She actually went so far as to make a feeble cheer in his honour by lighting a gas-burner in the parlour.

Poor Helen thereupon shivered at the gloomy aspect of the room thus made visible. A sofa pulled up against the wall; a table pulled up against the wall; no books, no articles of ornament whatever.

"Do you find this room warm enough?" asked the rich old woman. "It is not worth while to have a fire here; in fact, I have no fire at all except in my own room. Take care of the pennies, you know."

Chauncey agreed with her heartily. He had determined to agree with her on all points, and to make her like him if he could. And he succeeded. His handsome face and fine, deep voice appealed to some long-slumbering chord in the dried-up old creature's heart. There was something actually pathetic in the way she smiled up at him when he rose to go.

"I am glad that you came to see me," she said. "And I want you to persuade your mother to do as I say, and come here to live."

"I think that mother has nearly made up her mind to do so," Chauncey answered; whereat Helen gave a hopeless little shudder.

"Oh! I hope not," she ejaculated, as soon as the hall door was closed after them.

"Helen," her brother said, frothfully, "I wish you would try to overcome the miserable spirit of fault-finding which has taken possession of you. Nothing pleases you. You complain of our present place, which it seems to me is really well enough. One can't expect a paradise. And now you are equally critical as to this change of quarters. Why can't you make up your mind to be satisfied with your lot? You did not use to be such a grumbler."

Helen swallowed a sob.

"I think I must be growing very crabbed and sour," she said. "After a while I hope I shall be more contented. But I do miss dear Rose Hill so dreadfully."

If Chauncey felt a pang of conscience, he cheerfully choked it down.

"Really," he said, "I think it is a duty we owe to that poor old woman to make her life as bright and pleasant as possible. And she is a very old woman. She can't last long, and we might as well inherit her money as strangers."

"You are as bad as mother. Oh, dear! I would rather never have any money at all than to get it by—"

"Doing your duty to a lonely old relative? We can't force her to leave us her money, but if she does we certainly will not refuse it."

In a week's time the Chiltons were settled bag and baggage at Miss Debby's.

Poor Helen was the only real sufferer by the arrangement. From the first she found that she was expected to be at Miss Debby's beck and call at all hours of the day. It was a servitude, disguise the fact as her mother might.

Miss Debby found that it was very soothing to be read to sleep every afternoon, and consequently Helen was kept indoors, as a matter of course, during the pleasantest hours of the day, to wade through the very adulterated class of literature which Miss Debby patronized.

Then Miss Debby developed a passion for backgammon; and poor Helen's evenings gradually were all passed rattling the dice-box, and dreading moving white counters—Miss Debby monotonously preferred black—up and down the board.

At first poor Helen's patience and courage occasionally flagged.

Then her mother would put fresh strength into her drooping energies, imploring her to keep in the old lady's good graces at any cost.

Mrs. Chilton discovered that Chauncey's name had most potent charm for Helen.

"Think of Chauncey," she would say. "Think

how much he needs this money. Try to keep on the right side of the old lady for his sake."

Then Helen would go back to her bondage, and, for Chauncey's sake, endure the dullness and the weariness and the oppression. All her life she had been accustomed to make Chauncey the main object of her life. In her quiet, happy country home, his pleasure had been what she and her mother had chiefly looked to.

Chauncey himself, gradually, was at home as much in Aunt Debby's house as he used to be in the other residence.

He made it a point, to be sure, to spend an hour or so every day with the old lady, either in the evening, or during the day, but that hour or so was counted out of the time he usually spent away, so that his mother and sister were the losers thereby. Chauncey was not apt to admit that he had duties, but he developed a wonderful conscientiousness in the case of Aunt Debby. And his mother upheld him in this.

"It will probably not last long," she would say to him; "and in the meantime you can't pay her too much attention."

Gradually the idea of inheriting Miss Debby's money became the one absorbing idea of Mrs. Chilton's life. Everything must give way to it. In fact, this prospect seemed to be the one way of escape out of their straitened circumstances. His mother had finally made up her mind that Chauncey would never succeed in making a living for himself. Not that she blamed him for this.

"Poor fellow! he was not brought up to work," was the argument she used about him.

When Chauncey returned home one evening he found a new arrival installed in the grim parlour, which all Helen's endeavours had not succeeded in making look habitable.

His mother and Helen were both out of the room at the time, so that the stranger was constrained to make herself known, which she did by rising to her full height—very much above the average—and extending her hand.

"We are not exactly cousins, Mr. Chilton," she said, "although we both have the same aunt. I am Nora Skinner. Have I made a mistake? You are Helen's brother Chauncey?"

"I am; and your cousin-in-law?"

"Is that the relationship? I am glad to establish the point, as we may see a good deal of each other. I came to Aunt Debby's this morning, and was completely surprised not to find her alone as usual. But your mother and Helen were very good to me, and made me feel more at home than I have ever done in this house before. I have no other home at present, so I am obliged to be here. Until I find one, I am forced to eat the bread of idleness and dependence."

She said all this with a great deal of fluent self-possession. Chauncey did not criticize her communicativeness, however; he was too much occupied with studying her very beautiful face. She had profound, laughing dark eyes, that changed to searching eyes when in repose. She had a clear, colourless skin, and full red lips that disclosed wonderfully even white teeth. Her head was magnificently set on her shoulders, and this, together with the general cast of her features, gave her an almost regal air. She looked like a banished princess; those smooth, soft hands, not especially small, either, might with propriety wield a sceptre. Chauncey said to himself that he had seldom seen a more beautiful woman.

"And the bread of dependence has a very bitter taste, I find," pursued Nora. "I have never eaten it, since I've been a woman grown, until now. I experienced it when I was living with Aunt Debby, in the first place. She would have liked to make me her slave, just as she is making Helen her slave. Why do you allow it? Now, I could never have endured it; of course, if I had chosen, I could have stayed on here and worn myself to a shadow. My father left me on Aunt Debby's hands when he died, and it would have been infamous to have turned me out of doors. But I should have suffocated. Aunt Debby is not very fond of me, still she sometimes likes to have me with her; she likes young people about her. It is one of her fancies, and it seemed less forlorn to come here than to go to a strange house."

"Assuredly."

Chauncey might have added more, had not Mrs. Chilton returned at this crisis into the room.

Afterwards she spoke rather slightly of Miss Skinner to her son.

"Handsome? Yes, in a certain way; but I don't admire that style. Besides, I think that it is very indelicate, her coming here. It is easy to see she is after Aunt Debby's money."

"Really, mother, I think the less we say on that subject the better," Chauncey had the grace to reply.

"That is a very different matter," Mrs. Chilton said, with decision, and closed the subject, although, to be frank, Chauncey could not see wherein the difference consisted.

But in his heart he acquitted Nora Skinner of the charge.

There was something about the girl which placed her above the suspicion of any thing mean. And, somehow, in knowing Nora, Chauncey began, for the first time, to feel that there might be something mean in choosing for the chief business of his life the paying court to a rich old woman, for the sake of inheriting her money in the dim future, and, as the event proved, Nora left no room for criticism on this point, as far as she was concerned herself. She put advertisements in the newspapers, she answered advertisements. Finally she succeeded in obtaining a situation, and one at a much better salary than that which she had left. She lost no time in packing up her few effects and bestowing herself in her new quarters.

Perhaps Mrs. Chilton was the only member of the family who did not heartily regret her departure.

Chauncey had fallen into the habit of laughing at her outspoken remarks and watching every change of her beautiful face, until she had become, during the week she lived in the house, his chief pleasure. And to Helen she was the greatest happiness she had known for months and months. Helen fell desperately in love with her. Her very presence brought her delight and comfort. When she left it was as though all the air and sunshine had been taken out of the house.

Miss Debby took her going, as she had taken her coming, with perfect composure. She looked upon Nora as a perfectly independent person, who was able to take care of herself, and who did so. There had been a time when she had wanted Nora to hold the position which poor Helen now filled. But that need for the girl existed no longer. So Miss Debby did not trouble herself to ask her to come again when she bade her farewell—a circumstance which made an impression upon the homeless Nora, who, for all her independent ways, had, at the bottom of her heart, a horror of being entirely thrown upon the world.

"I have been upstairs to say good-bye to my aunt," she said, coming into the room where Helen and Mrs. Chilton were sitting, with her travelling-bag and her shawl on her arm. "And, do you know, she permitted me to kiss her withered cheek; but she never said 'Come again!'"

Mrs. Chilton secretly rejoiced in her heart.

Helen's eyes filled with tears as she sprang up and embraced Nora enthusiastically. It went to her very soul to feel that poor Nora was utterly homeless.

"But you must come to us, always, whenever you can. Mamma, tell her that she must. Mamma, here is this poor child going away to that strange place, and if she should be ill she has not a corner to crawl into. Tell her to come to us. Dear Nora, always come to us! Promise me to come!"

Mrs. Chilton was a mother, and consequently the softest spot in her nature was touched by this appeal.

She rose and kissed Nora very cordially. After all, could she not afford to be generous? Was not Nora going away, leaving the field to her own darling?

"Don't wait to be ill, my dear child," she said. "Come to us whenever you can. Come to us whenever you have a holiday. It makes Helen so happy to have you, and we shall all miss you. Promise us to come to us as often as you have the time."

Nora was a thoroughly sincere person herself, and she never doubted other people. Besides, hospitality was one of Mrs. Chilton's strong points; she would have shared her last crust with a beggar, and never given it a second thought.

Nora's going or coming was of importance in her eyes solely as it concerned Aunt Debby, and Aunt Debby had just professed her utter indifference to the girl.

Mrs. Chilton could afford, as I said, to be generous, and to return Nora's hearty kiss with real motherly warmth.

To tell the truth, of late, Nora had had reasons of her own for liking to be much with the Chiltons. Chauncey Chilton's mother had especial claims upon her affection.

By common consent, therefore, Nora came and went, thereafter, as one of the family. And if she failed to make her appearance when she was expected, Helen would always go to look her up. If she did not do so, she was sure to have her memory refreshed by her brother. Chauncey Chilton had never experienced a stronger emotion. It is said that a day of awakening awaits every soul. Certainly that day had overtaken Chauncey. Gradually, Nora filled every thought of his life. His whole nature took a richer, warmer colouring; his future had reference chiefly to her.

Alas, his future! Poor Chauncey—that future was built on no nobler foundations by reason of his love. He still continued to drift along, the slave of an ignoble fate. But when his ship did come in, he told himself, that their treasure would be valueless unless he could share it with Nora. He did not actually tell her that he loved her; he felt the degradation of his useless, purposeless life sufficiently to shrink from asking her to share it until it should be gilded with gold; but he implied it in numberless ways, and Nora was very happy for the knowledge.

Yes, it was a marvel that this strong-hearted, strong-souled girl should fancy a weak, aimless man like Chauncey. But it may have been that ever-recurring law of contrast which brought them together. Moreover, her circle was, and always had been, limited; and Chauncey possessed the advantage over men she had known before of great social grace and ease of manner. That appealed to Nora as a superiority not belittled by her very ignorance of the world.

It was on the cards that her knowledge of the world should be enlarged just about this time.

A young girl at the school where she taught took a surprising fancy to her, and invited her to a party at her house.

Nora accepted, nothing loth, but found Mary Courtland's family to be very much grander people than she had ever known before. To be sure her magnificent beauty "adorned her like a crown," otherwise she would have felt herself to be extremely plain and dowdy in a Swiss muslin dress that had been through many washings, and with a pair of kid gloves which had a lingering odour of benzoin about them all through the evening, suggestive of the fact that they had been cleaned for this occasion.

But little Mary Courtland, full of the enthusiastic devotion of sixteen, stood ready to receive her at the head of the stairs, and pinned a magnificent white camellia in her hair and another at her throat, which made a fine toilet by themselves; and in spite of her shabbiness Nora was so beautiful, that there were many applicants for the honour of an introduction. Mary was triumphant. Her mother had not wanted Miss Skinner to be asked.

"She is all very well in her own way, but really I don't see what pleasure there would be for her in meeting a crowd of people she never saw before, and will probably never see again."

But Mary had carried her point in spite of this; to tell the truth, she was infatuated with Nora, and she was determined to give her some pleasure if she could.

That was the beginning. Mrs. Courtland lost her heart to Nora just as her daughter had done; she called on her after that, and asked her to her house again.

Then a Miss Maynard, whose brother had fallen in love with Nora at first sight, also called, and was very cordial and gushing. Also two or three others—all quite grand people. Nora found herself suddenly in the very best society.

To tell the truth, it was an entirely new sensation. She had lived hitherto on the outskirts of society, belonging to that large class who have few acquaintances, stay much at home, and work for their living.

In consequence of these visits to be received and to be returned, she gradually saw very little of the Chiltons.

Helen was unselfishly rejoiced at her good fortune, even though she herself was the loser thereby.

Mrs. Chilton was a little severe on the subject of sudden friendships, but politely indifferent; but Chauncey was gloomy and wretched at the change in Nora's fortunes. How could he be expected to rejoice at what separated him from her?

He began to be very sensible of the fact that Nora was far more independent of his society than she had been at the outset of their acquaintance. Chauncey was more miserable than he had ever been at any occurrence of the kind before. He reasoned to himself that Nora was gradually slipping quite out of his grasp. He could see that she was wonderfully beautiful and charming; it was not surprising that others should make the same discovery.

He knew these new acquaintances of Nora's, some at least by name, while some of them were actual acquaintances. They belonged to a particularly delightful set; they were unusually attractive, agreeable people. It was not strange that Nora should be attracted by them, and should respond to their advances.

Then, from what he could gather, William Maynard was paying Nora all kind of attentions; it was Nora's own fault if she did not fulfil a pleasant engagement with him every day or so, either to drive, or to go to a concert, or to go to the theatre or opera. And William Maynard was considered an excellent match; he had a fortune to begin with, besides being in a very excellent business; to be sure, he was not

brilliant; but he was otherwise an unexceptionable young man.

One afternoon, when Nora had run in for a half-hour's gossip with Helen, Chauncey sat a little apart from the two girls and reflected moodily upon these things.

His mother had gone out on business, and presently Helen was carried off to attend to some cooking for Miss Debby; so he and Nora were left alone. He heard Helen beating eggs downstairs, so that he knew she would not be with them again for some little time.

The coast being clear, he began on the subject which he had fully made up his mind to introduce to Nora. He crossed the room and sat down beside her, as he said:

"Nora I have been so very unhappy of late. May I tell you about it?"

She turned her magnificent eyes upon him with a look of tender pity in them as she said:

"Indeed you may. I wish I could help you."

"You are the only person who can help me. And yet it seems a piece of injustice to ask you to do so; I made up my mind that I could not, would not. But I overrated my strength. I find that I have not the moral courage to see you drifting away from me, even if towards happiness, without reaching out a distracting hand, begging you to stay with me. All these people can't need you as I do. Am I horribly selfish? But it is my love which makes me selfish."

Then, for the first time, Nora acknowledged to herself that she loved Chauncey. The tears swelled up her eyes. One fell upon her hand. Chauncey bent down, and kissed it; then, when he held her head in his, Nora did not attempt to release it.

"I would have told you long ago that I loved you," Chauncey went on, "but I am a very poor man, you know. It seemed as though I had no right to ask you to share my poverty."

Nora made an impatient gesture.

"What do you take me for?" she cried. "Riches are an accident. If you were a rich man, would I have you just on that account?"

"Yes, I know that you are thoroughly high-souled and generous, and on that very account I did not want to take advantage of your noble nature. But you must know how peculiarly I am situated."

Here Chauncey leaned towards Nora, and dropped his voice.

He was too absorbed to notice that the door of the room—behind their chairs—was pushed gently open, and that Aunt Debby came in and stood on the threshold.

Aunt Debby's visits were very infrequent to this part of the house; it was not strange that the idea of her coming now should not have occurred to either Chauncey or Nora. Nevertheless, there she was, and her nephew's next words fell full on her ears.

"But this sort of thing can't last for ever. And when Aunt Debby has gone, and we are once more independent—oh, Nora, you will be my wife?"

But Nora pulled away her hand.

"I was afraid that you felt in that way," she cried. "And yet it seemed an insult to believe it of you. Why, I would rather beg my bread from door to door than live on from day to day in such ghastly uncertainty. Actually, you are waiting for Aunt Debby to die—calculating your chances! Oh! I don't love Aunt Debby very much, and she doesn't love me very much, but at all events I do not spend my life counting off the hours of hers. No, indeed; I would rather work my fingers to the bone."

Chauncey was more moved than he had often been in all his life. He dropped her hand and flushed up angrily.

"You are allowing your eloquence to run away with you," he said. "You are strangely uncharitable and unjust. As to working, I would be glad enough to do it, if I could find work. My conscience acquits me on that score. And for the rest, it is an undoubted fact that Aunt Debby is a rich woman and an old woman, and that I shall probably outlive her; and you are well aware that she has made no secret of her preference for me. That is how the case stands."

"Exactly. And as it stands I cannot congratulate you upon your spirit of independence. You asked me to be your wife. Do you mean will I promise to wait until Aunt Debby dies?"

Angry as she had made him, Chauncey was constrained to reply:

"In spite of your scorn, I can only repeat that I certainly would not ask you to share my lot as it is at present."

"And I will never, never be engaged to you on such a contingency as you suggest. But I do not regret that we have had this conversation. You see we have not understood each other's natures at all. I can see that I have made you very angry. But that will make it all the easier for you to forget me."

Here Aunt Debby withdrew noiselessly—her teeth

set, a strange light in her eyes. She went upstairs and wrote a note to her lawyer, requesting him to call upon her that afternoon.

He was closeted with her for hours; and in that time he drew up a will, in which she left the bulk of her property to Nora Skinner.

Then, in his presence, she destroyed a will which she had made previously, in which she had made Chauncey Chilton her sole heir, with the exception of legacies here and there.

The last will she desired to sign in the presence of witnesses immediately, and for that purpose made an appointment with the lawyer, at his office, the next day.

There the will was duly signed, sealed, and registered, and Miss Debby returned home with it, where she kept it in her writing-table until the day of her death.

Meanwhile Nora found it expedient to take her departure; her interview with Chauncey over, and having put on her hat and pinned on her veil, she ran downstairs to bid Helen good-bye, who, having put in her sponge cake to bake, was sitting by to watch the progress of this operation with crossed hands and flushed cheeks.

She sprang up to kiss Nora good-bye, in great amazement at her sudden departure.

Nora vouchsafed only a hurried explanation, folded her in her arms, cried a little, kissed her many times, and was gone. And, after that, she did not darken their doors for many days. Which Aunt Debby duly noticed and chuckled over; which Chauncey gloomily accepted; which Mrs. Chilton commented upon with ill-natured resentment; upon which, finally, Helen put her own construction—in a measure the correct one.

Meanwhile Nora endeavoured to adapt herself to circumstances and to be happy. She was not altogether, however.

At first, such was her righteous indignation at what she called Chauncey's meanness and want of spirit, that she found it comparatively easy to do without him; nay, she even began to fancy that she might find Mr. Maynard more interesting than she had done before.

But this was only at first. Gradually the people she met, the men who admired her, the things she did galled upon her more and more. Then she began to understand that mystery of love which loves in spite of reason, in spite of conscience even. Chauncey might do wrong, but, such as he was, she would rather be with him than with any other man about whom she happened to have no cause of complaint; and in such a mood was she one night when Chauncey's card was brought up to her. She ran down to see him joyfully. She had been waiting for this overture for some time, or rather hoping for it.

"I have come to say good-bye," he said, almost immediately. "I am going away to-morrow. I have finally found something to do. I do not mind acknowledging—to you—that I might have succeeded in this before, had I been less fastidious. I am going as a clerk in the banking house of Dymond, Gold and Co."

"Oh, I am so glad!" she exclaimed, with clasped hands and heightened colour.

"You are not flattering," was the response, and yet Chauncey did not look offended.

Nora laughed a little, and blushed a little more.

"Nevertheless, I think that you know what I mean, and why I am glad," she said, bravely.

"Nora—I hardly dare ask—but if I succeed in making my living, will you care? If you see that I really can work, will you trust yourself to me?"

Her answer? At all events it sent him away a very happy man, and it kept him up to the mark and full of courage during months of toil after that, during which she, for her part, toiled too; but, oh, with such a light and happy heart!

In the late spring, when days began to be heavy and oppressive, Aunt Debby became ill, alarmingly ill.

Finally, one day, the doctor took Mrs. Chilton aside, and told her that he had no hope of the old lady's life. "It was only a question of hours. If it had been possible for Helen to be more patient and forbearing now than she had been before, she would have been so. Every energy was taxed to soothe the last hours, to smooth the few remaining steps into the dark valley of the old lady."

One day she was sitting by her bedside when her mother brought her a letter from Chauncey.

Miss Debby peevishly requested her to read it aloud, which Helen did, without a misgiving that Miss Debby would take umbrage at the contents. But at a loving message to Nora, Miss Debby fired up.

"What's he sending messages to that girl for?" she asked, almost inarticulately, so angry was she.

And Helen, in utter unconsciousness of her cause of complaint, made matters worse by telling her the whole truth.

"Nora and Chauncey are engaged," she said. "Perhaps I ought to have told you so before, but I am sure they won't mind your knowing about it now."

What Helen meant was that it seemed hard to let Miss Debby pass out of the world in ignorance of what so intimately concerned those nearest to her. To her great surprise, Miss Debby writhed in unaccountable distress. She seized Helen's arm.

"You are all leagued against me," she said; "but it is not too late yet to thwart you all. Ring the bell; no—go at once yourself for my lawyer. Hurry—lose no time, or I'll curse you."

Pale with fear, Helen obeyed. On her way downstairs, she called to her mother hastily to go to Miss Debby.

Mrs. Chilton had no sooner seen the ghastly look on her aunt's face than she sent their servant in hot haste for a doctor. But neither the doctor nor the lawyer had time to reach there before Miss Debby died.

All was over when Helen returned, pale and panting, from her bootless errand.

Thus the will bequeathing everything Miss Debby owned, excepting legacies here and there, including Helen and her mother, was not set aside; and Chauncey Chilton's wife was a very rich woman. And it is strange enough that he never knew how it happened that his aunt's fortune was left to Nora instead of to himself. M. L.

FACETIÆ.

How to shorten ocean voyages Lengthen the ships.

To show his contempt for mad dogs, a Liverpool man has cooked and eaten one.—*Figaro*.

A CERTAIN man has a watch which he says has gained enough to pay for it itself in six months.

THE SALT IN IT.—"What is it that causes the saltiness of the ocean?" inquired a teacher. "The cod fish," was the reply.

THE origin of the word muff, applied to a fool, is said to be that a muff holds a woman's hand without squeezing it.

Is it proper to speak of a poultry show as a "hen opera," considering that the hens attempt nothing but the simplest lays?

If there is one time more than another when a woman should be entirely alone, it is when a line full of clothes comes down in the mud.

AN honest old farmer, on being informed the other day that one of his neighbours owed him a grudge, growled out, "No matter; he never pays anything."

DISLIKE.—A Western paper says of the air, in relation to a man: "It kisses and blesses him, but will not obey him." Poor Dobbs says that description suits his wife exactly.

A JUNIOR asked a young lady the following conundrum: "If small girls are wails, are larger ones wailers?" "Certainly," she replied. "At any rate, the boys are in the habit of applying them to their lips in sealing their vows."

THE REASON WHY.—One of the young McStingers asked Mr. Bunsby the other day, why the Indians called their homes wigwags? "Because," replied the man of the sea, "it is there where they keep their scalps."

A DONKEY steeplechase was "one of the attractions" of a "flower and horse show" at Spalding last week. We are not told if the donkey chased the steeple or the steeple pursued the donkeys.—*Figaro*.

DELICATELY PUT.

Customer: "I'm afraid I am getting a little bald!"

Operator: "Well, sir, I think, sir, when you attend public washup, if I was you, I'd sit in the gallery."—*Punch*.

"THE CONSCIENCE CLAUSE."

Rector's Wife: "And what's your father, my boy?"

Boy: "My father's a 'baginator,' an' he says he won't have me learnt no Catechism, 'r else you'll all of yer 'ear ov it!"—*Punch*.

SEVENTEEN REASONS.—"Stranger, will you try a hand with us at poker?" "Thank you, gentlemen, but there are seventeen reasons why I cannot accommodate you just now." "Seventeen reasons for not playing cards! Pray, what are they?" "Why, the first is, I haven't any money." "Stop! that's enough; never mind the other sixteen."

ENGAGING CANDOUR.

Papa: "And pray, sir, what do you intend to settle on my daughter? and how do you mean to live?"

Intended: "I intend, sir, to settle myself on your daughter, and to live on you!"—*Punch*.

A PARTY of young men one night started out to seduce a lady friend. They exerted themselves to

the best of their ability for about half an hour in front of the house, when something white on the door attracted their attention, which, upon investigation, was found to be a card saying—"House to let."

HARD THINGS TO DO.

To convince a mother that her baby is ugly.
To persuade a young lady to extend the "mitten" to her beau who is worth a cool ten thousand.

For a dead cod-fish to climb a greased sapling tall foremost, with a loaf of bread in his mouth.

To find a man who is not influenced by money.

To find a merchant who don't care about making more than cost and carriage.

To find a purse containing a fortune, without an owner.

To persuade a printer to live on "ple."

THE ELEPHANT'S SERMON.

In olden times, when—it is said—
The humblest of the brute creation,
(Though not in school or college bred,)

Possessed the art of conversation;

The elephant, as chief high-priest;
Of brutes the proper censor morum,
Assembled every bird and beast,

And plainly laid their faults before 'em.

Some were of vanity accused

(Though none by name the priest addressed)

And some their talents had abused
By indolence or wild excesses;

And some were charged with envious minds;

And some with foolish ostentation;

And not a few the censor finds
Convict of wanton depredation;

And some, the elephant declares,
Are basely cruel and malicious;

Some fail to mind their own affairs;

And most, in some respects, are vicious.

The faithful hound, the trusty horse,
The constant dove, the modest linnet,

The sermon hear without remorse;

Nay, find a deal of pleasure in it!

In brief, the best of all the crowd
Are charmed to hear the wise prela-

tion;

The others frown, or rave aloud,
Or hang their heads in deep dejection!

The wolf and tiger howl in wrath;

To hear the parson's faithful child-

ing;

The serpent hisses in his path!

The worm goes wriggling to his

hiding;

The wasp and hornet buzz their spite;

The monkey mooks with hideous

grinning;

The fox goes sneaking out of sight,
To wait another chance of sinning.

"Ah—well!"—the elephant exclaims,
Though ill enough ye seem to bear it,—

(Remember, I have called no names)

Whom the coat fits, may take and

wear it!" J. G. S.

GEMS.

CARE not for that which you can never possess.

UNLESS a tree has borne blossoms in spring, you will vainly look for fruit on it in autumn.

THERE is a false gravity that is a very ill symptom; and it may be said, that as rivers which run very slowly have always the most mud at the bottom, so a solid thickness in the constant course of a man's life is a sign of a thick bed of mud at the bottom of his brain.

SAYS a venerable divine: "As we advance in life, so many whom we have loved and honoured are translated to the other side, it seems sometimes as if Heaven would be more familiar and home-like to us than earth. We do not go when we die to a land of strangers, but to one where scores of our best friends are occupying mansions, in which they will welcome us as cordially, and entertain us as hospitably and lovingly as they used to in their earthly homes."

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

CLOSETS.—Closets and cellars are used by most families as receptacles for every variety of unseemly things; both are usually dark and without means

of ventilation. Closets are used also for soiled clothing, which accumulates from time to time, until washing-day, retaining all the peculiar effluvia, and, if any part of the clothing has been worn by a sick person, that sickness is liable to be communicated to all the members of the family. Typhoid fever, small-pox, cholera, and many other dangerous diseases have been communicated from old clothing, even months after it has been worn; the safe plan is to have every closet communicate with outdoors, so as to have a draught through every day.

APPLICATION FOR BURNS.—M. Leibgot recommends the following mixture as having been very successful: Cape aloes, four ounces; water, ten ounces; alcohol, three ounces. The ingredients are to be melted together in a china plate over a slow fire, allowed to cool, and then filtered; after which three more ounces of alcohol are to be added. It is then ready for use. A tablespoonful of the mixture mixed with a teaspoonful of acetate of lead and twenty teaspoonfuls of water, constitutes an excellent remedy. It is to be applied morning and evening on the burnt parts.

STATISTICS.

POPULATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.—The Registrar-General estimates the population of the United Kingdom in the middle of this year, 1874, at 82,412,010, being 600,000 more than double the population enumerated at the first Census in 1801. The population of Ireland in 1874—viz., 5,300,466—is only 84,000 more than in 1801. The population of Scotland in 1874—viz., 3,462,916—is 212,000 more than double the population in 1801. The population of England and Wales in 1874—viz., 23,648,609—is above 5½ millions more than double the population in 1801.

SULPHUR IN SICILY.—According to a report addressed by Signor Parodi to the Italian Government, it is estimated that the sulphur in Sicily will be exhausted in from fifty to sixty years. There are about 250 sulphur-mines in the island, producing about 1,800,000 quintals yearly, besides the enormous quantity which is lost through defective methods of working. In 1871, 1,725,000 quintals were exported, of which England took from 500,000 to 600,000, and France about 400,000 quintals. The ore contains from 15 to 40 per cent. of pure sulphur, but the average amount extracted is only 14 per cent. The sulphur fetches at the pit's mouth about 6l. 60c.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE Duke of Edinburgh has appointed Mr. J. Fryer, M.D., C.S.I., honorary physician to Her Majesty, to be physician to His Royal Highness.

THE Duke of Devonshire has consented to preside at the inauguration of the Salt statue. The ceremony will take place on an early day in August.

MADAME ARABELLA GODDARD and M. Blondin, the tight-rope dancer, have been wrecked in the mail steamer "Flintshire," off Cape Cleveland. Though they were saved, they lost all their effects.

THE following persons have been recommended by Mr. Disraeli to the Queen for Civil List Pensions:—Lady C. Jackson, 100l. per annum; Miss Eliza Meteyard, 40l. per annum, in addition to 60l. already per annum; Miss Jerardine Jewsbury, 40l. per annum; Mr. R. H. Horne, 60l. per annum.

A TERRIBLE FACT.—It may startle many readers to learn that in the space of thirty-three years, since the unfortunate steamer "President" left New York on the 11th of March, 1841, never again to appear to mortal ken, leaving not a trace of her fate, nearly fifty-five steamers, including the West India mail boats, have, while on their passage across the Atlantic, been utterly destroyed.

THE first of the series of statues of distinguished statesmen which are to be placed in the pretty ornamental gardens known as Parliament Square, opposite Palace Yard, is at length completed, and the full-sized figure in bronze of the late Lord Derby, the work of Mr. Tobie, has been hoisted on to the pedestal erected for it there. The Commissioner of works, Lord H. Lennox, who granted the site, has paid several visits to it since the work was commenced, and Mr. Disraeli unveiled it on the 11th instant. A statue of Lord Palmerston is to be erected in the adjoining garden.

THE appearance in the Peers' Galleries during the Gold Coast debate of an ebony-coloured gentleman with an umbrella excited considerable remark. Some would have it that the stranger, who apparently took much interest in the proceedings, was no less a personage than King Koffie, who had come all the way from Ashantee to hear what was to be said about the Gold Coast in general, and himself in particular. Oh inquiry, it turned out that the stranger was a nephew of the King of Abyssinia, who has come to this country for the purpose of being educated.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ROSA'S SIBS.—The handwriting, though peculiar, is remarkably good.

DICK STABLEIGHT.—Your wishes were inserted in a previous number.

BRUNSWICK.—We can just now only acknowledge receipt of your letter.

ANNE C.—Your handwriting is very good and in legibility and prettiness is much above the average.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.—Letters have been received from "Semper Fidelis" and "Mr. C."

G. W.—The lines about "Mabel May" are tolerably pretty; as to their originality we have no opinion.

MISS M.—Doubtless you have found that the request was attended to.

GUSTAVE.—We think it would be only prudent for a clerk of twenty years of age to wait three or four years before he thinks of contracting a marriage.

CASSANDRA.—The word "paradoxical" can be found in most if not all of the English dictionaries. It signifies an unwise feeling.

J. G. S.—These verses entitled "This Faded Rose" are of unequal merit; the piece as a whole must be declined.

JULIA W.—You should apply to one of the hospitals where special attention is paid to skin diseases, for instance St. John's Hospital, Leicester Square.

A BRIGHT LITTLE ANGEL.—We quite agree with you, a young lady aged fourteen should certainly wear long sleeves. We think you write a very nice letter in a very good hand.

D. S.—It is perhaps not altogether impossible for you to get an inkling of the conclusion at which you wish to arrive, by doing unto others as you would they should do unto you.

HEAD BOWLINES.—Your letter has arrived truly, but being without superscription or definite address it is positively useless; therefore it is unnecessary to consider probable chances of success.

YOUNG GLASGOW.—The assertion about a first-class education in medicine does not accord with the other portions of the letter. The internal evidence supplied by the application should, we think, lead to its rejection.

J. G. M.—Your handwriting is very good. Upon the other matter you should be advised to wait until your prospects are more matured. You can well afford to wait for five years.

MISS F.—When so much indecision is found to exist, it is usually the wiser course to postpone the consideration of the subject until a time arrives when you will be better able to determine upon the qualification you require in a future husband.

ANNE.—Before you read this you should have discovered that your first letter was duly replied to. In acknowledging the receipt of your second we have only to add that we have been unable to discover any further particulars concerning the millionaire Jones.

JOHN R.—The lines entitled "Gone" are very good. We venture, however, to think that the copyist of the verses sent us and the author of those verses are not the same individuals. A person of sufficient culture to write such verses would hardly have been betrayed into the orthographical blunders by which the copy is disgraced.

PUPIL TEACHER.—1. Morrell's English grammar and Guy's geography can be recommended. 2. The colour of the hair is rather of a flaxen than a light brown shade. It is not pretty in our opinion; the predominant shade cast over it is so very dull as to chase every thought of brightness in its possessor away.

A LOVER OF THE SEA.—The situation of a stewardess on board ship is difficult to obtain, it is generally bestowed upon some one personally known to those connected with the vessel. In your efforts to obtain such a situation you could inquire at the offices of charterers of ships and generally at places where the higher grades of seafaring men frequent, but without influence your task will be very difficult.

B. F.—The hands should be frequently washed, and in using the towel the skin, which is apt to grow over the root of the nail, should be carefully rubbed back. The nails must be properly trimmed with scissors made for the purpose. The rubbing back should take place every morning at least; the priming every third morning or as often as necessary. Your letter is written in an ordinary style and is very legible.

J. W.—A tradesman is the usual designation of the person who is the owner of a retail business carried on at any particular shop or place. The term does not rightly apply to his assistants or his clerks. A person only nineteen years of age could hardly be a tradesman, because being a minor he would have no capacity to contract. It is not thought prudent for a male of nineteen to marry.

DICK TURNER.—We are unable clearly to describe a galvanic apparatus without the aid of a woodcut, and there-

fore recommend you to pay a visit to some one who makes philosophical instruments and get permission to inspect the battery. You should also pay a visit to the Polytechnic Institution in Regent Street, Cavendish Square, where this and other scientific contrivances are to be seen in action and are explained by lecturers and others appointed for the purpose.

J. M. R.—The lady in considering such circumstances as your letter details would feel that she was not sought for herself, and though she had a dowry would almost shudder at the thought of resigning herself and it to one who is so many years her senior. Her prudence for one would get the better of her pity, and probably she would think, course with some compassion, that if the adverse circumstances had not been overcome by the mature age of fifty they perhaps never would, at least on this side of the grave. For is there not an old adage which says:

At ten a child, at twenty wild, at thirty tame, if ever;
At forty wise, at fifty rich, at sixty good, or never?

ALPHA AND OMEGA.—Without reopening the question as to the practicability of rolling two single gentlemen into one, a theme which has already been ably treated in other quarters, we think that for matrimonial purposes the undesirability of anything approaching to such a proceeding is agreed upon. The process of love-making couples is very confusing, because the ladies like the eyes of A and the voice of O and so forth. They select bits of each and so select a phantom; for individuality will no more exist in selected morsels taken from different beings than in an incongruous compressed mass or jumble. Therefore it is that we discourage those unsystematic announcements and defer to put these young men's wishes in print until they think proper to walk alone. Each should woo a maiden by himself; that settled, the friends, not the lovers, can talk matters over together and discuss prudent considerations. Indeed a true friend at such an epoch is invaluable, so long as he remains a friend and is not present and does not interfere with the love-making.

GOLDEN RECOMPENSE.

"Oh! where are you going, my sweet, pretty maid?"

"Oh! where are you going?" said I;

"With your ruffs, and cuffs, and wonderful puffs,

And the light in your eyes, and the light in your eyes."

"I'm going," she cried, as she tripped away,

"To the hills or the mountain's peak,

Or down where the restless wild waves break,

A husband for to seek, to seek,

A husband for to seek!"

"Oh! what did you gain, my sweet, pretty maid?"

"Oh! what did you gain?" I said;

"With your smiles, and wiles, and beautiful smiles,

And the turn of your shining head?"

"Oh! what did I gain but a lover, sir,

And a wealthy man is he;

Oh! what did I gain but a lover kind,

A husband that is to be, to be,

A husband that is to be!"

"Oh! what has your lover, my sweet, pretty maid?"

"Oh! what has your lover?" said I;

"Has he truth, and youth, and a heart, forsooth,

That will love you to the end?"

"No youth has my lover (four score-and-ten),

But his truth none may gainsay,

And in place of a heart he has given to me

Ten thousand pounds to-day, to-day,

The morn of my wedding day."

"Oh! what will you do, my fair, pretty maid?"

"Oh! what will you do?" I said;

"With no hearts, or darts, or lover's parts,

To sweeten your daily bread?"

"Oh! I'll make the best of my chosen lot,

Of my husband rich and old."

And merrily dance with the jolly throng

To the jingle of his gold, his gold,

To the jingle of his gold!"

M. A. K.

MAGGIE S.—In such a tempest of the heart as that under which you appear to be suffering a friend would plead with you first of all for delay. Your true friend would entreat you to stop the interview for a time. During that interval you should consider as seriously as you can two questions at least. Has your sweetheart, think you, the ability or the means to do all those things which you expect him to do, and which probably he has told you he can and will do? And has he the disposition to keep his word in a kind and amiable manner? If he has both ability and kindness, and you are really united, you can rough it a good deal if necessary; but if any of these things are wanting you should refuse to give him your confidence, and steel your heart, lest it should be "thrown by the spoiler carelessly away."

TIBBIE, MINNIE AND LILY.—And pray what are we to say to you three merry girls? We have reserved your round-robin until all other of this week's batch of letters have been answered, and still are at some loss how to reply to you. And you would bribe as well as coax us! Shooking! Yes, we can hear your cheerful laugh ring through the room as you read this reply, though we ought to get very stern over the business, and would do so only the putting of your lips is not so pleasant as your smile, weak mortals though we be to tell you so. Three pupil teachers each of what of a sweetheart! Why what about the lessons, and the Cambridge middle-class examination, and the music-mistress, and the various certificates you are expected to get and so forth? You really have no time for sweethearts just now. Your laurels are in danger, don't lose them; give up the thought of those horrid men, at all events until after the examination is over. Now do wait until then, and even then don't let the mathematics you have learned drive out of your mind the consideration of that wise old saw, "They who marry in haste repent at leisure." The seriousness of the matter is in your letter has, we hope, passed away by this time, if not take medical advice about it;

and once more do not just yet neglect the studies for the sake of flirting with the young men. That season will arrive for you in due time; everything is at its best in its proper season.

S. A. H., eighteen, dark hair, blue eyes, and good looking. Respondent should be a sailor.

MISCHIEF would like to correspond with a dark gentleman who is fond of home and music, has an income, and is very affectionate.

CLARA E., twenty, 5ft. 2in., dark hair and eyes, wishes to correspond with a dark gentleman about twenty-two, who would make her a loving husband.

M. D., twenty, tall, dark hair, moustache, and good looking, would like to marry a young woman who is good tempered and affectionate.

WILLIAM, twenty-one, 5ft. 3in., dark complexion, good tempered, and loving disposition, is desirous of forming the acquaintance of a young lady of light complexion, and well domesticated.

ANNE C., twenty-two, good figure, respectfully connected, fair, loving, and longing for some one to love her, would like to correspond with a young man, loving, and a mechanic preferred.

ALICE, twenty-two, fair, blue eyes, and very affectionate, would like to correspond with a tall, dark gentleman about twenty-eight, loving, and in a tolerably good position.

ROVER, twenty-six, a staff-sergeant, who has travelled, tall, dark, and good looking, would like to correspond with a fair young lady not over twenty-three. She must be well connected and educated, and make a fond wife.

ROSEBUD would be glad to correspond with a tall, dark young gentleman about twenty or twenty-three. "Rosebud" is entitled to 300l. on her wedding-day; she has black waving hair, black eyes, good complexion, loving, domesticated, and fond of music and singing.

VILL F. S. would like to correspond with a handsome young lady about twenty, domesticated, and with an income. He is twenty-two, of the medium height, with dark-brown hair and eyes, considered good looking, and learning the business of a merchant.

L. A. A., middle age, a widower, tall, stout, a tradesman all alone, of good family and connections, would like to correspond with a highly respectable widow or maiden lady having some means of her own. She would find a loving and fond partner.

EMMA, twenty-four, medium height, brown hair, and considered good looking, would like to meet with a steady, loving, and good tempered young man. She is thoroughly domesticated and adapted to business; one in H.M.S. not objected to, but he must be highly respectable.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

NELLIE E. is responded to by—"Clarence E.," tall, and fair complexion.

C. A. B.—"Good Tempered Eliza," who would like to hear farther from him.

G. A. H. by—"Edith S.," nineteen, medium height, fair, light curly hair, affectionate, and likely to make a good wife.

NELLIE D. by—"Vivian," twenty-two, dark curly hair, whiskers and moustache, and who thinks he would suit her.

J. C. B.—"May," medium height, dark-brown eyes and hair, domesticated, cheerful disposition, and fond of home.

MISS F. by—"Alice L.," nineteen, tall, fair, dark, long and wavy hair, of a loving disposition where love is returned, fond of home and children, training for a schoolmistress.

W. H. J. by—"A. B.," eighteen, medium height, fair, loving, fond of home, and domesticated; by—"Alice," seventeen, very fair, good looking, fond of home, very loving, and thinks she will suit him exactly; and by—"Rosa's Sibs," seventeen, tall, loving, good tempered, fond of home, highly respectable, and has had a good plain education.

HANNA Q. by—"Alice," twenty-three, who thinks she would suit him. She will manage with order and thrift a house with anyone, and likes to be at home better than out. She has golden-brown hair, brown eyes and eyebrows, fair complexion, with a good colour. If he accepts the answer, he will have a loving and cheerful wife; by—"Annie W. K.," fair, good looking, and domesticated; by—"Daisy," eighteen, fair, loving, and domesticated; by—"Daisy," twenty, tall, fair, good looking, fond of home, a good housekeeper, and thinks she is all that "Harry Q." requires; by—"Katie B.," who answers to his description; by—"Lou," twenty, medium height, fair complexion, good looking, and fond of home; by—"Emma," twenty, medium height, rather stout, dark, brown eyes and hair, very affectionate, and would make a true and faithful wife to a good and loving husband; and by—"A. N.," who has kept her father's house for nearly four years. She is a good housekeeper, very fond of home, and good looking.

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